CURSE KILLING ARC

1

Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY

STORY BY
RYUKISHI07

ART BY
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Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY

CURSE KILLING ARC

...CAN CHANGE UTTERLY IN AN INSTANT AND BE ENVEL-OPED BY DISASTER.

...THIS SCENERY THAT LOOKS PEACE-FUL AT A GLANCE ...

JUST LIKE THE SAYING, "NO ONE KNOWS WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS" ...

...YES.

SATOKO.

OH! HO!

OHH HO HO HO!

WHATEVER ARE YOU DOING UP THERE, KEIICHI-SAN?

HO! HO!

...RENA.

OHH! KEIICHI-KUN... YOU'RE ADOWABLE! I'M TAKING YOU HOME WITH ME! ♡♡

MION.

KEI-CHAAAN! I'M JEALOUS. YOU HAVE THE BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE! ☆

RIKA-CHAN.

KEIICHI... I'LL TELL YOU YOU'RE A GOOD BOY LATER, SIR.

I DON'T CARE WHO, JUST SOMEONE **GET ME DOWN!**

LIKE ME.

KYAAAA! KEI-CHAN'S MAD!

キャーちゃんがおこったー

あはははは

AH HA HA HA HA!!

CHAPTER 1

Higurashi WHEN THEY CRY
CURSE KILLING ARC

1 CONTENTS

1 CHAPTER 1 3

2 CHAPTER 2 37

3 CHAPTER 3 69

4 CHAPTER 4 113

5 CHAPTER 5 155

AFTER RIDING THE BULLET TRAIN, THEN THE NORMAL TRAIN FOR A FEW HOURS ...

...THEN GOING THIRTY MINUTES BY CAR ...

THERE'S A VILLAGE THAT I CAN'T BELIEVE IS IN THE SAME COUN-TRY AS TOKYO, WHERE I USED TO LIVE.

GARARARA (RATTLE RATTLE)

PICHICHI (CHEE-CHEE-CHEEP)

I WAS JUST ASTOUNDED AT THE INCREDIBLE LACK OF ANYTHING.

AND I ALMOST STARTED TO HATE HOW IMPETUOUS THE ARTISTIC PROFESSION IS. BUT...

WE CAME TO THIS VILLAGE BE-CAUSE DAD SAYS IT'S EASIER FOR HIM TO DO HIS JOB HERE.

SUU (INHALE)

I CAN...

...TASTE THE AIR...

GOOD MORNING KEIICHI. YOU'RE UP EARLY AGAIN.

YEAH, WELL. I TOOK TWO WHOLE DAYS OFF. WHERE'S DAD?

HE SAYS HE JUST FINISHED A JOB, SO HE'S STILL SLEEPING.

HOW MUCH RICE DO YOU WANT?

A WHOLE BOWL!

HEH HEH.

COULD THIS BE THANKS TO THE MOVE?

YOU REALLY HAVE BECOME AN EARLY RISER, KEIICHI...AND YOU EAT ALL YOUR BREAKFAST EVERY DAY TOO.

!

...BACK THEN, IT WAS AGONY GOING TO CRAM SCHOOL AND EVERYTHING.

SO I REBELLED AGAINST MY PARENTS...

...BY BOYCOTTING BREAKFAST...

THANKS FOR THE FOOD!

KACHA (CLICK)

I'M OFF!

I'M NOT LYING, MOM!

TA CRUNCH

TA

TA

TA

UNLIKE MY OLD SCHOOL, THIS SCHOOL ...

TAN (STEP)

...REQUIRES PHYSICAL ENERGY!

IT'S ONLY BEEN TWO DAYS...

BUT THE FEEL OF THIS GRAVEL AND DIRT ROAD THAT'S SO HARD TO RUN ON ALREADY IS MORE COMFORTABLE TO ME THAN ASPHALT!

...AH!

OH...

OH!

KEIICHI-KUUUUN! GOOD MORNING!

.....

GAAAAAN (CLAAAAANG)

...I'M SORRY... WHAT WAS YOUR NAME AGAIN?

AWA (FLUSTER)

AWA

AWA

Y-YOU'RE MEAN, KEIICHI-KUN! IT'S RENA! RENA RYUGU! I HOPE YOU WOULDN'T FORGET MY NAME AFTER TAKING JUST TWO DAYS OFF...I HOPE!

AWA

AWA

PFFT!

NO, YOU'RE THE MEAN ONE! DID YOU REALLY THINK I WOULD FORGET SOMEONE'S NAME AFTER A LITTLE THING LIKE BEING OUT OF TOWN FOR A FUNERAL FOR TWO DAYS?

EH? EH? WAS IT A JOKE... WAS IT?

OH, GOOD...

MAN, THAT RENA ...

COME ON!! WE'D BETTER HURRY; MION'S WAITING.

YEAH!

YOOOOO!

KEI-CHAN! RENA! GOOD MORNING!

RUNNING SO EARLY IN THE MORNING. YOU SURE ARE IN HIGH ENERGY MODE!

AND HERE THIS OLD MAN WANTED TO WALK SLOWLY TO SCHOOL.

YOU ALWAYS MAKE PEOPLE WAIT FOR YOU, BUT THE *ONE* TIME I'M LATE, YOU'RE HERE EARLY...

AH-HA-HA-HA!! WHATEVER ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

I WAS JUST TALKING ABOUT HOW NICE IT IS FOR YOU TWO TO BE SO ENERGETIC.

WELL ...

YEEEAAH, *THAT'S* RIGHT. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

IF YOU LIKE, WHY DON'T I SHOW YOU DIRECTLY HOW GAL-LANT MY SEAL IS IN THE MORNINGS ...

I DON'T THINK IT CAN BE HELPED THAT YOU'D BE ENERGETIC IN THE MORNINGS, KEI-CHAN.

SUPAPAAAAAN (KAPOOOOW)

W-WAS THAT HER ARM... OR HER KNEE...?

PIKU

PIKU

I WONDER WHAT YOU TWO ARE TALKING ABOUT SO EARLY IN THE MORNING? ...I WONDER.

PIKU (TWITCH)

PIKU

RENA PUNCH. FIRST THING IN THE MORNING.. I WAS... CARELESS

HEH HEH..

A SCHOOL THAT MIXES ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS BECAUSE IT'S IN THE COUNTRY AND THERE ARE SO FEW PEOPLE...

I'VE GOTTEN REALLY USED TO THIS SCENE TOO...

WHOOPS.

WAH!

HYO! (YOINK)

SQUEE SQUEE!

DOTA (STOMP)

DOTA

KI (GLARE)

AND!

GYAAAAA!

HER TRAPS HAVE TORMENTED ME EVER SINCE MY FIRST DAY HERE.

...HOWEVER!

I'M ALSO USED TO...

...HER TRAPS...!!!

(BISSHIRI) (PACKED)

YES! THE REAL TRAP IS DIFFERENT! AND IT'S THIS DOOR HANDLE, FILLED WITH YOUR SPITE!!!

OOHH!

おお。

THE BLACKBOARD ERASER YOU HUNG THERE SO OBVIOUSLY IS JUST A DUMMY TO DISTRACT ME!!

I'M ALREADY WISE TO YOUR TRICK!!

I WON'T KEEP FALLING FOR THEM OVER AND OVER!!!

HAAAA-HA-HA-HA! YOU'RE SOFT! TOO SOFT, SATO—

GARA

GARA

GARA

GARA (RATTLE)

UWAAAAH!

UAAAH!

KEIICHI-KUN, LOOK OUT!

TAPUN

TAPUN (SPLISH)

KO—!

KUN! (TWANG!)

BOTTLE: INDIA INK

ZUSHAAAA (CRAAAAASH)

しゃあ...

ZA (APPEAR)

PIKU (TWITCH)

PIKU

NARROW ESCAPE...

♪

OOOOOH-HO-HO-HO! WHAT ARE YOU PLAYING AT, KEIICHI-SAN? MAKING SUCH A SPECTACLE OF YOURSELF!

♡

KYAAAAA!

SATOKOOOOOO!!!

PUCH SNAP

70 4 11

I CAN SEE YOU'RE JUST DYING TO GET A TASTE OF MY FOREHEAD FLICK, KNOWN AS THE NOTCHED SPEAR OF THE FAR EAST, SATOKO-SAN!

I-I-I-I HAVEN'T ANY IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT! TH-TH-THIS IS A COMPLETE ONE-EIGHTY FOR YOU, KEIICHI-SAN!

PON (PAT)

PON

SFX: PURU (SHAKE) PURU PURU PURU PURU PURU

SATOKO WAS VERY LONELY WITH YOU AWAY FROM SCHOOL FOR TWO DAYS, KEIICHI, SIR.

I'LL TELL YOU YOU'RE A GOOD BOY, SO LET HER GO, SIR.

WHEN SHE PUTS IT LIKE THAT...

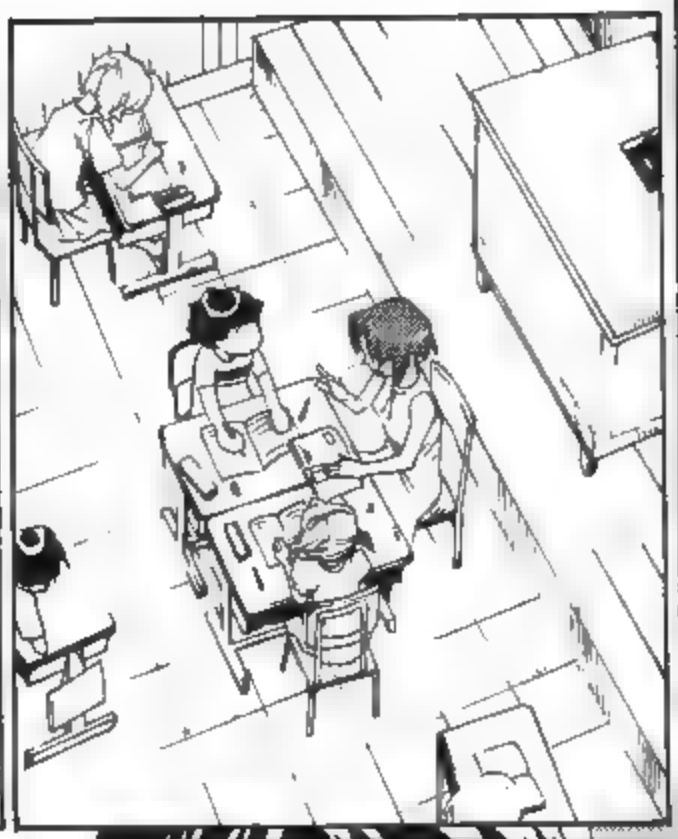
RIKA-CHAN...

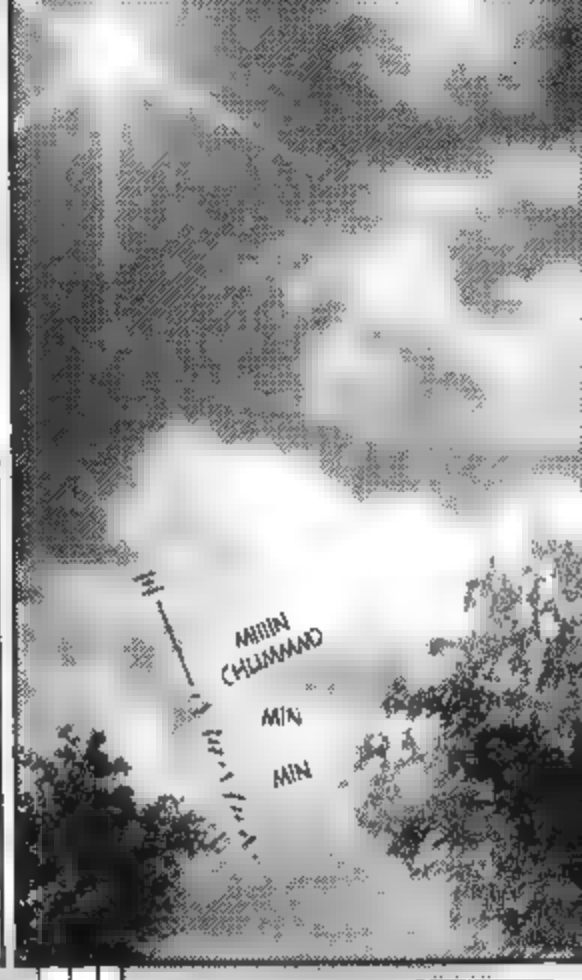
...THERE'S NOTHING I CAN SAY!

RI RIIIN (RRRRRING)

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, MAEBARA-KUN. TAKE YOUR SEAT.

ACK!! SENSEI!

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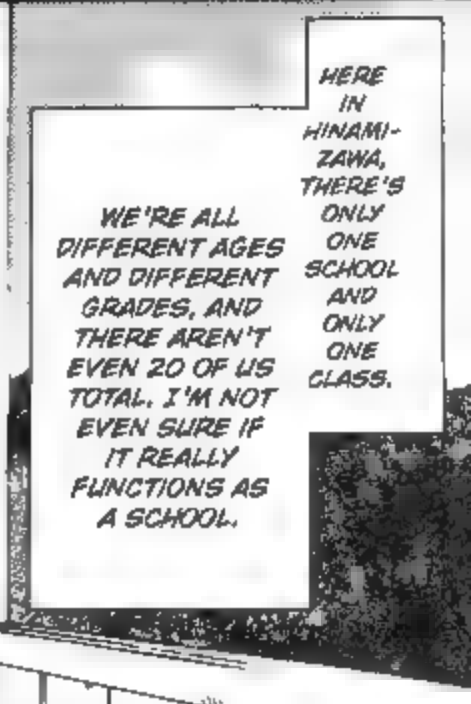
IT'S LIKE IT'S SO CARE-FREE, SO PEACE-FUL...
KEIICHI-KUN!


HERE IN HINAMI-ZAWA, THERE'S ONLY ONE SCHOOL AND ONLY ONE CLASS.
WE'RE ALL DIFFERENT AGES AND DIFFERENT GRADES, AND THERE AREN'T EVEN 20 OF US TOTAL. I'M NOT EVEN SURE IF IT REALLY FUNCTIONS AS A SCHOOL.

NEVER MIND RENA ...

AH! KEI-CHAN! ME TOO, PLEASE!
THERE ARE SOME PROBLEMS I DON'T UNDER-STAND. WOULD YOU MIND EXPLAINING THEM...?

...BUT YOU'RE A GRADE AHEAD OF ME, MION. I KINDA FEEL LIKE THERE'S A PROBLEM WITH *YOU* ASKING FOR MY HELP.

AH HA HA HA

WHAT THE HECK, KEI-CHAN! I'M AGAINST DIS-CRIMINATION!

THIS OLD MAN IS ALL BRAWN!

I'M BAD AT INDOOR THINGS!

ON A DAY LIKE TODAY W TH SUCH NICE WEATHER... YEAH... I'M SURE WE'LL STUDY BETTER IF WE GO OUTSIDE!

IF YOU DID THAT... THERE'S NO WAY THERE'D BE ANY STUDYING

I KNOW!

IF YOU HAVE TIME AFTER SCHOOL, KEIICHI-KUN... WHY DON'T WE ALL SHOW YOU AROUND HINAMIZAWA?

EH...?

OH!! GOOD IDEA. THIS OLD MAN APPROVES!

...

YEAH!! I'LL COUNT ON IT!

WAH!

THE FOUR OF US WILL SHOW YOU AROUND, SIR.

THAT SOUNDS LIKE IT COULD BE FUN!

...SO...

...IT COMES TO THIS ...

SEE PAGE THREE.

SHUT UP, SATOKO!

I KNOW YOU LIKE TRAPS, BUT THIS—

DO YOU THINK YOU SHOULD BE TALKING LIKE THAT?

KH...I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED THERE WAS A TRAP THE SECOND SATOKO SAID ANYTHING LIKE, "WE'LL SHOW YOU AROUND THE MOUNTAIN BEHIND THE SCHOOL!".

I WAS CARELESS.

WHATEVER ARE YOU MUTTERING TO YOURSELF ABOUT?

フーンボボボン OOOH HO HO HO

BURAAAN (DAAANGLE)

.....

...NOW, THEN.

PAN (PAT)

PAN

I'M TERRIBLY SORRY, SATOKO-SAMA. AN ARMY COULD FACE YOU ON THIS MOUNTAIN, AND YOU WOULD BE MORE THAN A MATCH FOR THEM.

VERY GOOD. ♡

GO

GO

GO

TEN MINUTES LATER.

I GUESS IT WAS UNREASON-ABLE TO THINK A WUSSY CITY BOY LIKE ME COULD CATCH FOUR GIRLS RAISED HERE IN THE COUNTRY ...

HAA

ZEE

HAA (WHEEZE)

ZEE (GASP)

NOT ONLY HAVE I COMPLETELY LOST SIGHT OF EVERY ONE OF THEM, BUT... I'M LOST...

CAPTURED = 0

...!

OH... THE FOREST EXIT?

PASHA (SNAP)

!?

WHERE AM I...?

NO... IT'S FINE IF YOU ASK FIRST...

HA-HA. I STARTLED YOU, DIDN'T I...? MAYBE YOU DON'T LIKE HAVING YOUR PICTURE TAKEN?

KI (GLARE)

SORRY, SORRY. YOU'RE RIGHT.

WHO IS THIS GUY...?

TO (SCRITCH) PORI

...YEAH.

A BOY LOOKING SO MELANCHOLY IN THE TWILIGHT. IT WAS JUST SO PICTUR-ESQUE!

ARE YOU FROM THIS VILLAGE?

AH, YEAH, KIND OF...I ONLY JUST MOVED HERE...

I APOLOGIZE FOR NOT ASKING YOUR PERMISSION.

AH, OH YEAH.

HI...

I'M KEIICHI MAEBARA.

HE DOESN'T... SEEM TO BE A BAD PERSON... I GUESS.

I'M JIROU TOMITAKE. A FREE-LANCE PHOTO-GRAPH-ER.

I COME TO HINA-MIZAWA A FEW TIMES A YEAR TO TAKE PICTURES OF THE WILD BIRDS HERE.

EXCUSE ME. ACTUALLY, I'M LOST...WILL YOU TELL ME HOW TO GET TO THE CENTER OF THE VILLAGE? WHATEVER YOU KNOW IS FINE.

HA HA.

IF I'M GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU, I'LL SHOW YOU THERE AS MY APOLOGY!

...THANKS.

HA HA HA...

THAT'S SCARY!!

STILL, WHAT WERE YOU DOING TO WIND UP LIKE THIS? YOU'RE ALL BEAT UP.

HMM, WELL, YOU MIGHT CONSIDER IT A ***LYNCH MOB*** OF SORTS.

.....

EH...?

I'M GLAD IT DIDN'T TURN INTO A REPEAT OF THE DISMEMBERED BODY INCIDENT FROM FOUR YEARS AGO!

DISMEMBERED BODY? IN THIS VILLAGE!? SOMETHING LIKE THAT HAPPENED?

EH? OH YEAH, YOU JUST MOVED HERE, DIDN'T YOU? SO YOU DIDN'T KNOW...

I ONLY KNOW WHAT I READ IN THE NEWS AND MAGAZINES, MYSELF.

HMMM... FIRST, BEFORE THE MURDER...

BUILD A DAM IN THIS VILLAGE?

BUT PEOPLE LIVE HERE!

INCIDENTALLY... THESE ARE THE REMAINS OF THE DAM SITE.

I GUESS IT WAS SEVEN OR EIGHT YEARS AGO...THE NATION WAS GOING TO TURN THE WHOLE HINAMIZAWA AREA INTO A GIANT DAM.

SIGN: AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY NO TRESPASSING

THEY WENT TO COURT, AND IT EVEN WENT AS FAR AS THE DIET. IT EVEN SHOWED UP IN TOKYO NEWSPAPERS.

...THERE WERE RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS, OF COURSE.

I DON'T KNOW THE DETAILS, BUT APPARENTLY THE TERRAIN HERE IS WELL SUITED FOR DAM CONSTRUCTION... BUT...

AT THE TIME, THERE WAS A RUSH TO BUILD DAMS BECAUSE OF THE ENORMOUS ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF THEIR ELECTRICAL POWER AND FLOOD CONTROL

BUT I THINK IT WAS ABOUT THIS TIME FOUR YEARS AGO. PEOPLE GOT INTO A FIGHT AT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE...

AND AFTER THAT, ALL KINDS OF SCANDALS AND CORRUPTION CAME TO LIGHT.

CONSTRUCTION WAS HALTED BEFORE THINGS GOT TOO COMPLICATED.

THERE WERE SIX ASSAILANTS.

THEY SAY IT GOT HEATED, AND THEY KILLED THE VICTIM...

...AND EACH OF THEM HID A PART OF IT.

1979年（昭和54年） 6月

ダム現場のバラバラ殺人

AFRAID OF BEING FOUND OUT, THE SIX ASSAILANTS DIVIDED THE BODY INTO SIX PIECES...

ALL BUT ONE OF THEM...

BUT FIVE COULDN'T BEAR THE GUILT AND TURNED THEMSELVES IN.

NEWSPAPER, 1979, SHOWA 54, JUNE (SUN) / DISMEMBERED BODY FOUND AT DAM CONSTRUCTION SITE / SHISHIBONE CONSTRUCTION WORKER / THE BODY IS STILL AT LARGE / WANTED LISTS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY / THE SIX SUSPECTS / AT THE OFFICE OF THE HINAMIZAWA DAM CONSTRUCTION SITE, THE PROJECT DIRECTOR XXX-SAN WAS ASSAULTED AND KILLED. THE BODY WAS DISMEMBERED / AROUND EIGHT O'CLOCK, THE MORNING OF / NOTIFIED THE POLICE FROM THE HOSPITAL AT / "THERE'S A MAN WHO IMPLIED THAT HE KILLED XXX-SAN." / WHEN THEY RAN THERE TO HEAR THE STORY, THE MAN CONFESSED. A PIECE OF A BODY WAS FOUND AT THE PLACE HE INDICATED, AND HE WAS ARRESTED ON SUSPICION OF MURDER. THAT SAME DAY, OTHER / WERE ARRESTED. BUT THE RINGLEADER IS STILL AT LARGE. THE POLICE ARE / HIS WHEREABOUTS. AS FOR MOTIVE, THE MEN TESTIFY THAT WHEN THE VICTIM TOOK THEM TO TASK FOR / DEVELOPED INTO AN ARGUMENT, THEY FLEW INTO A RAGE AND KILLED HIM. BUT THERE ARE SEVERAL DISCREPANCIES IN THE INDIVIDUAL TESTIMONIES, AND THE POLICE WILL / STIGATE FURTHER.

...HAS YET TO BE FOUND...

THE RIGHT ARM THAT HE HID...

THE LAST ONE IS STILL AT LARGE.

WOW...

SOMETHING LIKE THAT IN HINAMIZAWA...

THAT'S THE FIRST I'VE HEARD OF IT ...

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE, ISN'T IT? IN THIS PEACEFUL VILLAGE.

NO KIDDING!

I REALLY CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

PU (PFF)

IT'S JUST NOT VERY CONVINCING...

KEEEEEI-

CHAAAAAAAN!

AH-HA-HA-HA!

...UGH! I NEVER THOUGHT THAT HAVING YOU SHOW ME AROUND THE VILLAGE WOULD GET ME A COMBINATION OF FALLING INTO AN EVIL TRAP AND GETTING STRANDED.

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

THE REAL FUN STARTS HERE, KEI-CHAN! WE SAVED THE BEST SPOT FOR LAST!

REALLY!

AH HA HA HA HA

OHH...BUT YOU WERE SO ADOW-ABLE, KEIICHI-KUN... CAUGHT IN THAT TRAP...I WANTED TO TAKE YOU HOME WITH ME...

NO, RENA! I'M TELLING YOU, YOU NEED TO SUPPRESS THE URGE TO TAKE THINGS HOME WITH YOU JUST A LITTLE MORE!

.....

GUR (NOOGIE) GUR

KYAAAA!

GOOD-NESS! THAT'S OUR LINE, KEIICHI-SAN!

TO THINK THAT NOT ONLY WOULD YOU FALL CLEANLY INTO MY TRAP, BUT YOU COULDN'T CATCH A SINGLE ONE OF US!

HEY, MION. WHAT'S THAT?

...A MONU-MENT?

ENGRAVING, MONUMENT

YEAH, KINDA.

HUH? DID SOME-BODY TELL YOU?

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT... TO THINK THERE WAS A PLAN TO SINK THIS VILLAGE UNDER A DAM...

YEAH. A MONUMENT TO OUR VICTORY WHEN THEY WITHDREW THE DAM PROJECT.

...REALLY.

WE ALL BANDED TOGETHER AS ONE TO PROTECT THE VILLAGE AND FIGHT THE DAM.

IN THE END, THE PROJECT WAS WITHDRAWN... IT WAS A COMPLETE VICTORY.

...?

KEIICHI, OVER HERE, SIR.

IT'S ALSO MY HOUSE, SIR.

OVER HERE, KEIICHI, SIR.

HEY, THIS IS A SHRINE, SO I'M NOT GONNA RUN. THERE'S NO POINT IN...

KEIICHI-KUN, THIS WAY, THIS WAY!

YEAH, I'M COMING.

HURRY, KEI-CHAN!!

EH? THIS IS... ER, YOU LIVE IN A SHRINE, RIKA-CHAN?

...THERE'S NOTHING IN THIS VILLAGE...?

...HURRYING...

SERIOUSLY...

WHO WAS IT...? THE GUY WHO SAID...

...JUST LIKE...

.....

IT'S THE BEST.

...THE VILLAGERS PROTECTED THEIR IMPORTANT VILLAGE WHEN IT WAS IN TROUBLE...

WELL!? ISN'T THE VIEW INCREDIBLE!!?

GU (CLENCH)

EVEN IF...

PAKI (SNAP)

...I HOPE I CAN PROTECT THE PEOPLE WHO ARE IMPORTANT TO ME.

Ooooh-ho-ho-ho-ho! ♡

WHY DO YOU HAVE A POT ON YOUR HEAD IN A PLACE LIKE THIS, KEIICHI-SAN? ♡

GAN (CLANG)

GA (CRASH)

DON GONG

YURA (STAGGER)

.....

I SEE. I SEE... SO THAT FACE JUST NOW WAS FORE-SHADOWING THIS PLOT...

キャあ！ KYAAAA!

あはは AHA HA HA HA HA

WAAAHH!

SATOKOOO!!

...FATE HAS LAID A CRUEL TRAP IN OUR FUTURE.

NIPPAAA
(DEEEEAM)

Angel
CHAPTER 2

"CLUB ACTIVITIES."

YEAH! JUST WHAT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR...!

HOW ABOUT... "OLD GEEZER" TODAY?

THEY EXIST IN EVERY SCHOOL AND GIVE LIFE TO PALE SWEAT, TEARS, AND COUNTLESS DRAMAS.

OOOH-HO-HO-HO! IT IS OUR DUTY TO USE EVERY MEANS IN OUR POWER TO ACHIEVE VICTORY!

GASP!

DON'T TELL ME... YOU'RE TELLING THE CARDS APART BY THEIR OLD TEARS AND SCRATCHES !!?

IT'S LIKE...YOU GUYS CAN SEE THE CARDS...!

FIRST ROUND

I'M OUT, SIR.

ME TOO!

IN THIS SCHOOL, THERE IS ONE CLUB ACTIVITY... HEADED BY OUR LEADER, MION SONOZAKI—IT IS...

...AN EXCEEDINGLY SIMPLE ACTIVITY, "PLAYING A GAME WITH ALL OUR MIGHT."

I'M OUT.

YOU'RE GOOD!

THIS CARD... KEI-CHAN, DID YOU PUT A NEW MARK ON THIS CARD...!?

SECOND ROUND

IN THAT CASE...I'LL JUST SHOW YOU WHAT THE GREAT KEIICHI MAEBARA CAN DO!!!

BUT THE TACTICS BORN OF THAT SIMPLICITY TAKE SEVERITY TO THE EXTREME!!

HOW'S THIS, KEI-CHAN...? RIGHT HERE... A ONE-ON-ONE, ALL-OR-NOTHING MATCH?

THIRD ROUND

RENA'S OUT TOO!

I ACCEPT! DON'T CRY LATER!!

GOOD LUCK, KEIICHI-KUN!

ANYTHING TO WIN! EVERYONE EARNESTLY HAS THEIR SIGHTS SET ON THE VICTORY BEFORE US!!

WHY? BECAUSE...

...THE WINNER GETS NOT ONLY GLORY, BUT "POWER"!!!

THAT POWER IS...!!!

I'M SURE YOU'RE READY, KEI-CHAN?

NGH... UH... J-JUST A... WAIT ...

ONE-HUNDRED...

KEHO (COUGH)

...POINT ONE...

AH-HA-HA-HA-HA

UWAAAHH!

I'M TAKING YOU HOME!

...I GOT HIT WITH AN EVENING SHOWER BUT I'LL NEVER TELL...

NOTHING... IN PARTICULAR ...?

AFTER THEY MADE ME CROSSPLAY FOR THE CLUB'S PENALTY GAME...

DOSHAAA (POOOUR)

NO TIME TO GET OUT OF THE RAIN.

THAT'S PRETTY HIGH. WILL YOU BE STAYING HOME FROM SCHOOL TODAY?

ANY IDEA WHY YOU'D BE CATCHING A COLD AT THIS TIME OF YEAR?

...NO...

ANYWAY, GO SEE THE DOCTOR! I'M LEAVING A MAP HERE FOR YOU.

...YEAH...

I WAS SUPPOSED TO WIN!

KEHO

AUGH... HOW MORTIFY-ING...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, KEIICHI-SAN?

MEW

KEI-CHAN, FORGIVE ME!

KEIICHI-KUN, THIS IS EMBAR-RASSING!

AND HAVE A TIME WHERE I GET TO TASTE WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE THE MASTER OF LOTS OF SERVANTS...!

AND SEND ALL FOUR OF THEM TO COSPLAY HELL...

DAH (DASH)

STUPID HINA-MIZAWA!!!

AAARGH, SOME-HOW ALL THE VIL-LAGERS KNOW MY NAME...!!

SERIOUSLY, NOBODY SAW ME LIKE THAT YESTERDAY, DID THEY!!?

CHIRIRIIIN (JINGLE JINGLE)

MY, IF IT ISN'T THE MAEBARA-SANS' BOY. YOU'RE IN HIGH SPIRITS.

IS THIS... THE PLACE?

SFX: GASA.. (RUSTLE..)

入江診療所

SIGN: IRIE CLINIC

WOW...IT'S MORE RESPECTABLE THAN I THOUGHT IT'D BE...

KEHO (COUGH)

ARE YOU A FIRST-TIME PATIENT?

AH... YES.

OH? YOU... MUST BE...

IT'S EMPTY...

AH...? YES...

KEIICHI MAEBARA, RIGHT?

...EVERY-ONE IN THIS VILLAGE REALLY DOES KNOW MY NAME AND MY FACE, HUH...?

YOU LIVE IN THAT BIG MANSION... RIGHT? EVERYONE HAS HAD THEIR EYE ON IT SINCE IT WAS BEING BUILT...

OH... YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT IT YET ...

IT'S A WONDERFUL FESTIVAL. IT HAS A HISTORY; WOULD YOU LIKE TO HEAR IT?

HEE-HEE... OF COURSE. IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR THE COTTON DRIFTING, AFTER ALL.

COTTON DRIFTING ...?

A COLD... AT THIS TIME OF YEAR...?

YES, PROBABLY. I DON'T THINK IT'S ANYTHING MAJOR, BUT... I'D LIKE TO GET OVER IT AS SOON AS I CAN.

ONE DAY, LONG, LONG AGO, A GREAT NUMBER OF DEMONS CAME FLOODING OUT OF THE SWAMP ...

...AND ATTACKED THE VILLAGERS, ONE BY ONE.

THERE'S A LEGEND THAT SAYS THE BOTTOM OF THAT SWAMP IS CONNECTED TO HELL.

IN THIS VILLAGE ...

... THERE'S A BOTTOMLESS SWAMP KNOWN AS ONIGAFUCHI, THE WELL OF DEMONS.

THAT'S THE TALE HANDED DOWN IN THIS VILLAGE, SO THE PEOPLE HERE HAVE A FERVENT BELIEF IN OYASHIRO-SAMA.

AND ONCE A YEAR, THEY HAVE A CEREMONY TO GIVE THANKS TO OYASHIRO-SAMA...THAT IS THE "COTTON DRIFTING."

BUT WHEN THE VILLAGERS THOUGHT THERE WAS NO HOPE LEFT, OYASHIRO-SAMA CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN ...

...CALMED THE DEMONS, MADE THEM REPENT, AND CAUSED THE DEMONS AND VILLAGERS TO LIVE TOGETHER IN PEACE.

SFX: KUSU (CHUCKLE) KUSU

WOW... WHAT A STORY...SO, THEN, IT'S A FESTIVAL, RIGHT...?

DOES IT?

EH?

SOUNDS FUN.

EVEN THOUGH EVERY YEAR, WITHOUT FAIL...

...SOMEONE DIES ON THAT DAY...?

EH...?

KUSU

THERE WAS A DAM CONSTRUCTION PROJECT IN THIS VILLAGE SEVERAL YEARS AGO...

...AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE PROJECT WAS KILLED. DID YOU KNOW THAT?

Y-YEAH... KIND OF...

PAPER: 1979 (SHOWA 54) JUNE (SUN) / DISMEMBERED BODY FOUND AT DAM CONSTRUCTION SITE / SHISHIBONE — CONSTRUCTION WORKER — / THE BODY IS STILL AT LARGE — WANTED LISTS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY — THE SIX SUSPECTS — AT THE OFFICE OF THE HINAMIZAWA DAM CONSTRUCTION SITE, THE PROJECT DIRECTOR, XXX-SAN, WAS ASSAULTED AND KILLED. THE BODY WAS DISMEMBERED — AROUND EIGHT O'CLOCK, THE MORNING OF — NOTIFIED THE POLICE FROM THE HOSPITAL AT "THERE'S A MAN WHO IMPLIED THAT HE KILLED XXX-SAN."

BUT THAT INCIDENT... STARTED WITH AN ARGUMENT...AND THEY CAUGHT... MOST OF THE CRIMINALS.

YES, THAT'S TRUE... BUT YOU KNOW? THE INCIDENT DIDN'T END THERE...

IT SEEMS LIKE THE VERY RELIGIOUS OLDER VILLAGERS... ARE CONVINCED THAT THE INCIDENT WAS "OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE."

A CURSE... FOR TRYING TO SINK THE VILLAGE UNDER WATER...YOU SEE?

OR A CURSE?

THE YEAR AFTER THAT, THE WIFE OF THE YOUNGER BROTHER OF THE COUPLE THAT DIED TWO YEARS BEFORE WAS BEATEN TO DEATH...

THE NEXT YEAR... THREE YEARS AGO NOW, A COUPLE WHO WERE FROM THE VILLAGE BUT APPROVED OF THE DAM PROJECT ...

...FELL OFF OF A VIEWING PLATFORM OVER A CLIFF WHILE ON VACATION.

OR A COINCIDENCE?

THE NEXT YEAR, THE PRIEST AT THE SHRINE DIED OF AN UNKNOWN ILLNESS...AND HIS WIFE KILLED HERSELF TO GO AFTER HIM.

WAS IT A PERSON?

EVERY ONE OF THESE MURDERS...

THE WIFE'S BODY WAS NEVER FOUND...

...HAPPENED ON THE DAY OF THE COTTON DRIFTING.

...WILL BE SACRIFICED THIS YEAR ...?

IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN WHO...

I'M SORRY, SENSEI.

MAEBARA-KUN'S REACTION WAS JUST SO FUNNY ...

!!

SFX: KUSU (CHUCKLE) KUSU

TAKANO-SAN.

YOU MUSTN'T TALK TOO LONG WITH THE PATIENTS. NOW, MAEBARA-SAN, PLEASE STEP INTO THE EXAMINATION ROOM.

SHE WAS TEAS-ING ME ...!?

...KIND OF A WEIRD STORY...

THAT WAS...

TAKE CARE OF YOUR-SELF!

ZNGH

ZOKU

ZOKU

ZOKU (CHILL)

A CURSE...

BUT THERE WOULDN'T BE A CURSE IN THIS DAY AND AGE, RIGHT?

UGH!! THAT NURSE.

AH-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!

あはははは!

THE MEDICINE'S JUST KICKED IN, SO I'M FEELING GREAT!!!

KURU (SPIN)

RIGHT!! I'LL DROP BY THE SCHOOL!! YEAH! THEY SHOULD BE HAVING CLUB RIGHT ABOUT NOW.

HEEEY!

OH!! THOSE ARE MY CLASSMATES TOMITA-KUN AND OKAMURA-KUN!!

WAAAH!

MAEBARA-SAN!

HELLO!

ARE YOU FEELING OKAY?

OH, YEAH. I JUST GOT SOME MEDICINE AT THE CLINIC.

...MAE-BARA-SAN, DID YOU MAYBE CATCH COLD BECAUSE ...

...OF THE PENALTY GAME YESTER-DAY...?

HMMM

I-I-I'M SORRY, I'M SORRY !!

YOU SAW!!? THAT!!? YOU SAW ME LIKE THAT !!?

GAKU (SHAKE)

GAKU

GAKU

WERE... YOU TWO...

HA (GASP) THEY EVEN STAYED AFTER SCHOOL, JUST TO WATCH OUR CLUB ACTIVITIES ...!?

WAIT A MINUTE ...!

GIKU (GULP)

...HOPING TO SEE ONE OF THE FOUR OF *THEM* GET THE PENALTY GAME AND COSPLAY ...?

GIKU

...RIKA-CHAN AND SATOKO !!?

GIKU

BASED ON YOUR AGES, I'D GUESS...

ZUZU (SNIFFLE)

NN... WELL, ASSUMING YOU'LL KEEP COUNTING ON ME IN THE FUTURE ...

WHAT ABOUT TODAY? ARE THEY... HERE?

OH, I THINK...

まおまお

MAEBARA-SAN!

UOOOOHHH!

UOOOHH! I'M SORRY! BOTH OF YOU!!!

WITHOUT EVEN KNOW-ING IT, I CARRIED THE WEIGHT OF BOTH OF YOUR PURE HOPES, AND I STILL LOST!!?

GASH!! (CLAASP)

THEY WENT HOME WITHOUT HAVING CLUB TODAY.

HMMM.

UM, I THINK SONOZAKI-SAN WAS SAYING SHE HAD TO HELP GET READY FOR THE COTTON DRIFTING FESTIVAL ...

REALLY...?

IS MION...ON THE SETUP COMMITTEE OR SOME-THING?

COMMITTEE...? NO, SONOZAKI-SAN'S FAMILY ARE LIKE THE LEADERS OF OUR VILLAGE!

THEY AND THE VILLAGE CHIEF'S KIMIYOSHI FAMILY AND THE SHRINE'S FURUDE FAMILY ARE CALLED THE THREE FAMILIES. THEY'RE VERY DISTINGUISHED!

HUH. THAT'S NEWS TO ME ...

BOOOO OOAAAAZE...

AH...OH NO. I'M GETTING DIZZY AGAIN.

OH WELL. THEN I'M GOING HOME.

THANKS, YOU TWO.

OKAY! TAKE CARE!

WHEN THERE'S NO CLUB, IT'S SO BORING I CAN'T STAND IT.

GOTTA GET TO BED.

I HAVE TO HURRY AND GET OVER THIS STUPID COLD AND GO TO SCHOOL TOMORROW...

JAN! (TADAH!)

THE NEXT DAY.

OH, MY!! YOUR LUNCH IS FABULOUS TODAY, MION-SAN!!

THE VILLAGE CHIEF AND EVERYONE CAME OVER FOR A BIG DINNER LAST NIGHT! THESE ARE LEFTOVERS.

AND BE-SIDES ...

IT'S SO FANCY WITH ALL THAT VARIETY, SIR.

RIRIIIIN (RRRRING) RIIIIN

IF YOU WEREN'T SUCH A WUSSY CITY BOY AS TO ACTUALLY CATCH A COLD OVER A LITTLE THING LIKE THAT, THERE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ANY PROBLEMS.

THAT'S *RIGHT*... NORMALLY YOU WOULD PRESENT THIS LUNCH TO ME AS A GET-WELL PRESENT, WOULDN'T YOU?

ZZZZ~

IT'S PARTLY FOR POOOOR LITTLE KEI-CHAN ...

...WHO CAUGHT A COLD AFTER WANDERING AROUND IN A *VERY* CUTE OUTFIT!

HMMM.

HIKU! (TWITCH)

おおーっ! OOOHHH!

TODAY I MADE APPLE SLICE BUNNIES.

!!

YOUR LUNCHES ARE ALWAYS SO CUTE, RENA.

OOOOH-HO-HO! OUR LUNCH IS FANCY TODAY TOO!!

BUT WE'RE REALLY GLAD YOU GOT BETTER AFTER ONE DAY, KEIICHI-KUN!

THAT MII-CHAN, SHE WAS SOOOO WORRIED.

お弁当鑑定
LUNCH JUDGING
AND YOU HAVE QUITE THE VARIETY! LIKE THE SIDE OF SPINACH AND THE BOILED HIJIKI.
RIKA-CHAN IS VERY GOOD AT ALL KINDS OF SIMPLE, HOME-STYLE COOKING.

THIS IS... A YAKINIKU LUNCH!! IT'S A LITTLE TOO INTENSE FOR A GIRL'S LUNCH AT FIRST GLANCE ...
BUT WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT US ALL EATING IT TOGETHER, IT'S A PERFECT ADDITION TO THE LUNCH TABLE!

WOW, YOUR OWN COOKING, HUH?
I'M IM-PRESSED.

...WAIT.
PITA (STOP)

レーぱ〜
PAAAA (BEEEEAM)
I'M GOING TO CATCH MY FUTURE HUSBAND, SIR.

NN...COME TO THINK OF IT, RIKA-CHAN AND SATOKO... YOU GUYS ARE LIVING TOGETHER FOR SOME REASON, RIGHT?
THAT'S RIGHT! WE DO ALL OUR OWN COOKING!

AAAAAAHHH!!!

OOOOHH!! WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM, KEIICHI-SAN!!?

SATOKO, THERE'S A GRAIN OF RICE COMING OUT OF YOUR NOSE

WH-WHAT'S WITH YOU ALL OF A SUDDEN, KEI-CHAN?

I FORGOT...

ALL THEIR OWN COOKING... THAT IS A PROBLEM I HAVE TO DEAL WITH...

NOTHING ...

BUT I'M SLEEPY ...

TORO (TRUDGE)

TORO

OH... KEIICHI!

ALLLLL RIGHT... I THINK I CAN GO TO SCHOOL TODAY...

KUAAA (YAAAWN)

KEIICHI... WILL YOU BE OKAY ON YOUR OWN, GETTING MEALS AND EVERY-THING...?

DEPENDING ON HOW THINGS ARE, WE MIGHT HAVE TO STAY A FEW DAYS ...

...SO YOUR FATHER AND I HAVE TO GO TO TOKYO TO HELP OUT.

PATA (PATTER)

GATA (CLATTER)

PATA

YOUR FATHER'S SENSEI PASSED OUT RIGHT BEFORE AN EVENT. IT'S A VERY IMPORTANT EVENT...

...YEAH, I'LL MANAGE... YEAH...

MUNYA

MUNYA (MRMBLE)

MEALS...? I'VE COOKED WITH A MESS KIT BEFORE...

YEAH...WELL... I COULD MAKE MISO SOUP AND INSTANT MEALS...

I'LL MANAGE.

YEAH...

I'LL MANAGE...

YOU'RE OLD ENOUGH THAT YOU COULD LEARN HOW TO COOK AND BUDGET FOR YOURSELF!

REALLY? THEN I DON'T HAVE TO LEAVE VERY MUCH MONEY, RIGHT? NO EATING OUT. IT'S TOO EXPENSIVE!

MOTHER! HURRY

HMM, YOUR PARENTS SURE ARE BUSY, KEIICHI-KUN! YOU NEED TO TAKE GOOD CARE OF THINGS WHILE THEY'RE GONE!

NO! NEVER MIND THAT, FOOD! FOOD!! THIS IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM!!

UWAAAAAHHH!

HOW CAN I MANAGE!!?

EVEN *YOU* SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE CURRY, RIGHT, KEIICHI-SAN?

THEN WHY DON'T YOU JUST BITE THE BULLET AND COOK FOR YOURSELF?

BAH (CLINGE)

STUPID!! SHH!!

I CAN'T EAT CURRY THREE TIMES A DAY!! CURRY'S JUST JUNK FOOD!

NOW, LOOK, YOU... THE CURRY I LEARNED HOW TO MAKE AT CAMP IS THE EXTENT OF MY COOKING SKILLS!

A.K.A. THE CURRY DEMON.

...DID I HEAR...

GO (RUMBLE) GO GO GO GO GO GO

...SOME-ONE SAYING BAD THINGS ABOUT CURRY ...?

RUMIKO CHIE, OUR HOME-ROOM TEACH-ER.

GARA (RATTLE) GARA GARA GARA

ぶん BUN ぶん BUN ぶん ぶん BUN (SHAKE) BUN

. .I'M SORRY... I REALLY AM.

ER, HEY, ISN'T THE FACULTY ROOM ON THE OTHER END OF THE HALL ..?

SUCH BLOOD-LUST..

YOU WON'T GET OFF WITH JUST TAKING A DAY OFF FOR A COLD.

...BUT IN HINAMIZAWA, CURRY IS THE ONE FOOD... YOU'D BETTER NOT SAY BAD THINGS ABOUT... NOT CURRY!

KEI-CHAN...YOU CAN SAY WHATEVER YOU WANT ABOUT OTHER FOOD...

REALLY ...

WAS I HEARING THINGS...?

PISHAN (SNAP)

MEALS ARE REALLY GOOD WHEN YOU MADE THEM YOURSELF!

YOU SHOULD JUST DO YOUR BEST AND GIVE COOKING A TRY, KEIICHI-KUN!

OH-HO-HO-HO!! THAT'S RIGHT!!

WELL, YOU MAY GET SOME SMALL SKILL FROM COOKING A FEW TIMES!! BUT YOU WON'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST US!!

...

YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT.

IF I DON'T MASTER A FEW COOKING SKILLS SOON, THEN I'LL BE COMPLETELY POWERLESS IF WE HAVE A COOKING CONTEST IN CLUB!

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING!? EVEN *I* CAN COOK A LITTLE!!!

WHAT ARE *YOU* ACTING ALL HIGH AND MIGHTY FOR!!? I BET ALL YOU DO IS DROP DISHES BEHIND RIKA-CHAN, SATOKO!!!

KACHIN (SNAP)

WAH HA HA HA!

...I WORRY ABOUT THE POTS AND THE STOVE IF I'M NOT WATCHING, SIR.

SOMETIMES SHE FORGETS TO TURN OFF THE GAS, SIR.

BUT SHE CAN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BROCCOLI AND CAULIFLOWER!

Y-YOU CAN EAT BOTH OF THEM IF YOU BOIL THEM!!

AT LEAST... I CAN MAKE RICE AND MISO SOUP!

BUT, BUT, SATOKO-CHAN CAN COOK SOME.

DOWAH HA HA HA!

RRGAAAAAHHH!

I DON'T CARE ABOUT EVERY-ONE ELSE! BUT I CAN'T ABIDE KEIICHI-SAN LAUGH-ING AT ME!!

IT MAY NOT LOOK LIKE IT, BUT I DO TAKE TURNS COOKING WITH RIKA!!!

GA-HA-HA-HA-HA!

IT'S TRUE THAT I DON'T HAVE AS MUCH COOKING EXPERIENCE AS ANY OF YOU!! BUT!! I'M CONFIDENT I CAN COOK BETTER THAN YOU, SATOKO!!

I'M AT LEAST BETTER THAN YOU, SATOKO!!

WASHA (RUFFLE)

WASHA

WHAT WAS THAT ...?

COME ON, NOW. YOU CAN MAKE A COMEBACK IF YOU CAN TELL US THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CAULI-FLOWER AND BROCCOLI!! WHICH ONE'S GREEN?

YOU'RE SUCH A WITTLE BABY, SATOKO-CHAN!

...ERK.

...OHHH...?

WAAAAH! STUPID KEIICHI-SAN!

TALKING LIKE THAT, YOU MUST BE PRETTY CONFIDENT, KEI-CHAN...

HOW ABOUT THIS...? TOMORROW AT LUNCH...THE FIVE OF US WILL HAVE ***A LUNCH CONTEST.***

SFX: GIKU (GULP)

BUT...

NO...

KH... THIS... COULD BE KINDA BAD...

OH MY! THAT'S A BRILLIANT IDEA, MION-SAN!

NOW'S YOUR CHANCE TO APOLOGIZE, KEIICHI-SAN!

NOW I'VE SAID IT!!

THAT'S FINE WITH ME...

DON'T RUN SCARED... WHEN YOU SEE MY LUNCH TOMORROW ...!!

GOOOOOO CRUMMMMBLE

オオオオ

...WILL BE TO BAD-MOUTH CURRY IN FRONT OF THE FACULTY ROOM.

CURRY

ゴク..

GOKU.. (GULP.)

BY THE WAY, THE PENALTY GAME...

WHAT KIND OF...

YOU'LL BE KILLED.

OH...

...I BET HE'LL BE MADE INTO CURRY.

...WHADDAYA THINK?

HEEEY, KUMA-CHAAAN!

FAN

FAN

FAN

FAN CHONK

FAN

OOISHI-SAN!

SOME-WHERE IN SHISHI-BONE

...TERRIFYING THING HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO...?

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

KANA

KANA

THE VICTIM IS FEMALE. APPROXIMATELY TWENTY TO THIRTY YEARS IN AGE. WE BELIEVE SHE DIED TWO OR THREE DAYS AGO.

THE WEIGHTS CAME OFF AFTER SHE SUNK IN THE GUTTER. SHE FLOATED TO THE SURFACE WHERE A RESIDENT FOUND HER.

WHAT'S IT LOOKING LIKE?

NOT ONLY WAS HER ABDOMEN RIPPED OPEN, HER EARS AND NOSE WERE SLICED OFF.

AND SEVERAL LONG NAILS WERE FOUND IN THE FINGERS OF BOTH HANDS...

THE FESTIVAL IS... APPROACHING AGAIN THIS YEAR...

CHAPTER 3

DON'T RUN SCARED...

...WHEN YOU SEE MY LUNCH TOMORROW!

:: ALL RIGHT!

DINNER (AND TOMORROW'S LUNCH) IS NOTHING!!

NOW!! I COOK !!

I'M DETERMINED THAT I HAVE TO AT LEAST AVOID GETTING LAST PLACE AND THE PENALTY GAME...

BECAUSE IF THEY MAKE ME BAD-MOUTH CURRY IN FRONT OF CHIE-SENSEI, SHE'LL KILL ME...

FIRST, THE RICE...I WASH IT...

しゃか JAKA

しゃか JAKA (RATTLE)

SWITCH, ON!!

THE LIGHT'S ON!!

ピッ (BEEP)

NEXT... MISO SOUP!!

味噌

YEAH!! AUTOMATIC RICE COOKERS REALLY ARE ONE OF THE THREE SACRED TREASURES!

LABEL: MISO

味噌

.....

ぎゅっ

TAKE THAT!! ADD TO TASTE !!!

LOOKS LIKE KINDA A LOT, BUT I LIKE IT THICK!!! THICK!!!

BUKYURURURU (SQUIRRRRRRT)

DAN (CHOP)

DAN

NEXT!! NEXT IS VEGETABLE STIR-FRY!! CHOP!! CHOP!!

DAN

サラダ油

POUR THE OIL!!

WHOOOAA!!?

BOOOOO (BLAAAAAZE)

LABEL: SALAD OIL EGONA

CHIRI (SIZZLE) CHIRI

BOOOOOO

ボオオオオオ

GA HA HA HA

BOOOOO

ボオオオ

...IN DANGER!!?

HUH...? COULD IT BE... THAT I'M...

...REEEEALLY...

WHOA... I'M... KIND OF...

...LIKE AN IRON CHEF...!!?

BOOOO (BLAAAZE)

GYAAAAAAAAAA!

WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU DOING!!?

BAKKAAAAAAAAN! (KAPOOOOOW)

A FEW MINUTES LATER

SHUUUU (SIZZLE)

KEIICHI-SAN!! PLEASE, GET OUT OF THE WAY!!

...WE'LL PUT THE FIRE OUT, SIR...!

...WE...WE PUT IT OUT, SOMEHOW...

ZEE

HAA

ZEE (GASP)

HAA (WHEEZE)

...KRE...

NIPAAAA (BEEEEAM)

WE RANG THE BELL, BUT YOU DIDN'T NOTICE, SIR.

IF SATOKO AND I HADN'T GOTTEN HERE, THERE WOULD BE FLAMES AND SIRENS RIGHT NOW, SIR...

WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING HERE!!? THIS IS ILLEGAL ENTRY!!

IF YOU'RE GOING TO SAY THAT, THEN WE CAUGHT YOU IN THE ACT OF ARSON!!

ERK...

HONESTLY!! HERE WE COME TO SEE WHAT THIS "WONDERFUL DINNER" IS ALL ABOUT ...!!

FUUUU (SIGH)

RUDE LITTLE BRAT...SO YOU WENT OUT OF YOUR WAY TO COME HERE TO SEE THAT...!?

HIKU (TWITCH)

WE DON'T HAVE TO WAIT TO SEE IT FINISHED !!

AND WHO WAS SAVED BY THE RUDE LITTLE BRAT!?

ERRRK..

...SO, KEIICHI-SAN...

S-SO I DID PUT IN TOO MUCH ...!!?

F-FOR-GET ABOUT THE MISO SOUP!! THE RICE SHOULD HAVE COOKED FINE!!

DOROOOR (SLUUUDGE)

THIS DREADFUL STEW...DON'T TELL ME THIS IS...MISO SOUP...?

GOPO

GOPO (BUBBLE)

...WAS THE TIMER.

KEIICHI-SAN...THE BUTTON YOU PUSHED ...

EH!!? NO...I'M SURE I HIT THE SWITCH...

IT'S NOT FINE, SIR...

MEW...

UGYAAAAH!

SO WHAT DOES THAT MEAN!!? IN THE END, I...

...WAS NEVER ABLE TO MAKE SIDE DISHES! OR MISO SOUP!! AND I COULDN'T EVEN MAKE *RICE!!?*

ボッボッボッ

YOU'RE PATHETIC!! HAVE YOU FINALLY LEARNED YOUR PLACE? THAT YOU'RE A MAN WHO'S ONLY TALK AND COOKS WORSE THAN ANY-ONE!!!?

DOOOOOH-HO-HO-HO!

BUT AT THIS RATE, THERE'S NO DOUBT.

I DON'T KNOW WHEN MY PARENTS WILL BE BACK...

I TALK BIG, BUT I COULDN'T COOK A SINGLE THING... (CAN'T MAKE BREAK-FAST AND LUNCH FOR TOMORROW EITHER.)

I'VE... LOST... I'M COM-PLETELY DEFEATED ...

MEW ♥

AH HYA HYA HYA

AND I'LL HAVE THE PENALTY GAME TOMORROW FOR SURE!!! GOODBYE, LIFE!!!

AND OF COURSE I WON'T HAVE A LUNCH TOMOR-ROW!!

NADE (PET)

NADE

MEEW♪

I... I'M GONNA STARVE TO DEATH...

MEW ♪

SHOO! GET OUT OF HERE!

EH?

ZAAAAA (RUUUUUUN)

THIS IS PATHETIC. YOU'RE A GROWN MAN. I DON'T BELIEVE THIS...

HAAAA (SIIIIGH)

はぁぁ…

YOU SHOULD JUST BE QUIET AND WATCH, KEIICHI, SIR.

KUI (TUG)

IT'S OKAY, SATOKO... I CAN CLEAN UP AFTER MYSELF ...

KEI-ICHI.

AWAWAWA (FLUSTER FLUSTER)

DON'T MESS WITH STUFF TOO MUCH! IF YOU TURN EVERYTHING UPSIDE-DOWN, MOM'LL...

LEAVE IT TO YOU... LEAVE *WHAT* TO YOU !!?

EH? BE QUIET? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, RIKA-CHA—

SHE MEANS WHAT SHE SAID. YOU JUST BE QUIET AND LEAVE THIS TO ME, KEIICHI-SAN.

GIRO (GLARE)

キロ

YOU'RE SUCH AN ANNOYING MAN!! NO BOYS IN THE KITCHEN!!

RIKA!!

GASHI (GRAB)

AYE-AYE SIR, SIR.

ACK

ZURU (DRAG)

ZURU

JUST A...RIKA-CHAN...

IF I LEAVE THE KITCHEN TO SA-TOKO, I'LL BE IN BIG TROU-BLE...

...SATOKO CAME HERE TODAY TO TRIUMPH OVER YOU, KEIICHI, SIR. IT'S HER REVENGE, SIR.

R-REVENGE !!?

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, HER FACE WAS PRETTY GRIM... ERK...

KACHI (CLICK)

...THIS SOUND ...

TON (CHOP) TON TON TON TON

THE SOUND...OF COOKING...

...THIS AFTER-NOON... I... ...WENT TOO FAR MOCKING SATOKO, DIDN'T I...?

COULD IT BE...SHE HELD THAT AGAINST ME...?

TON
TON
TON
SATOKO ISN'T ANGRY WITH YOU ABOUT THAT, SIR.
BUT SHE CAME ALL THIS WAY AND BARGED IN HERE, DIDN'T SHE...?
SHE'S... GOTTA BE ANGRY, RIGHT...?
SOOOO (SNEEEEAK
SHE'S NOT ANGRY, SIR.
SATOKO IS JUST SERIOUS BECAUSE SHE DOESN'T WANT TO FAIL, SIR.
EEEEEP!
SHE'S MAD!! I KNOW IT!! AAHH!! WHAT KIND OF RE-VENGE WILL SHE HAVE ON ME !!?
Y-YES, MA'AM!?
KEIICHI-SAN!! HEY, CAN YOU HEAR ME !!?
H-HOW IS *THAT* NOT ANGRY!?

UGH!! CLOSE THE MISO AFTER YOU USE IT!! YOUR REFRIGERATOR IS FILTHY!!

HONESTLY, WHY ARE MEN SO TERRIBLE AT CLEANING UP!?

YOU SCOOP UP A LITTLE BIT WITH A LADLE, THEN STIR IT INTO THE SOUP WITH CHOPSTICKS!! SQUEEZING IT ALL IN AT ONCE! OUTRAGEOUS!!

THIS IS HOW YOU PUT MISO IN SOUP!!

G-GAH! I'M SORRY...

AWAWAWA (FLUSTER FLUSTER)

NNNGH, I'M SORRY!!

NOW!! IT'S ALMOST READY!! CALL RIKA IN HERE, PLEASE!

PATA (PATTER) PATA

YES, MA'AM...

YORO (STAGGER)

RIKA-CHAN, IT'S ALMOST READY...

NIPPAAAA (BEEEEAM)

IT'S LIKE WHEN SATOKO WAS WITH HER NII-NII.

IT REALLY HAS BEEN A LONG TIME... SINCE I'VE SEEN SATOKO HAVE SO MUCH FUN, SIR.

NII-NII?

A CAT?

WHAT? YOU'RE IN AN AWFULLY GOOD MOOD, RIKA-CHAN. UNLIKE SATOKO ...

SATOKO'S NOT IN A BAD MOOD AT ALL, SIR. SHE'S HAVING A LOT OF FUN.

FUN!? THAT!?

SATOSHI... NEVER HEARD OF HIM BEFORE. SO SATOKO HAD A BROTHER ...

NII-NII IS SATOKO'S NICK-NAME FOR HER BIG BROTHER, SIR.

...HIS NAME IS SATOSHI.

...SHE MUST BE REMEMBERING WHEN SHE WAS WITH NII-NII...

...SHE MISSES THOSE TIMES ...

THAT'S...?

ENJOYING HERSELF, HUH...?

SATOKO ALWAYS ENJOYED HERSELF LIKE THIS WHEN SHE WAS WITH SATOSHI, SIR.

IT REALLY HAS BEEN A LONG TIME... SINCE I'VE SEEN SATOKO ENJOYING HERSELF SO MUCH, SIR ...

THEY MUST HAVE BEEN CLOSE... I BET ...

MAYBE HE'S A LOT OLDER...? MAYBE HE'S LIVING BY HIMSELF?

HMMM...

...SO HE DOESN'T LIVE WITH HER ANY-MORE...?

HMMM

...SEES SOME OF HER BROTHER...

COULD IT BE THAT SATOKO ...

...IN ME ...?

HA-HA. THAT'S CERTAINLY THE SAME WAY SHE AND I ARE NOW!

YES! VERY CLOSE ...!

NII-NII WAS WELL-BEHAVED AND A LITTLE UNRELIABLE...AND SATOKO WAS HIS SUPPORT...THAT'S WHAT THEY WERE LIKE TOGETHER.

SHE COULDN'T LEAVE YOU ALONE... SATOKO...

...IS STILL THE LEVEL-HEADED LITTLE SISTER, SIR.

IT WAS SATOKO'S IDEA FOR US TO COME HERE TODAY, KEIICHI, SIR.

SHE SAID, "THERE'S NO WAY SOMEONE AS UNRELIABLE AS KEIICHI-SAN COULD MAKE DINNER. WE HAVE TO GO MAKE IT FOR HIM."

IS THAT HOW IT WENT...?

...

I SEE...

THANK YOU FOR THE FOOD!

きちーん☆
KICHIIIIN (SPARKLE)

I... UNDER-ESTIMATED YOU, SATOKO.

WOW THIS IS REALLY REAL FOOD

YOU COM-PLETELY BEAT ME...

BUT I CAN COOK MUUCH BETTER THAN YOU, KE!CHI-SAN!!

OOHH-HO-HO! HAVE A BETTER OPINION OF ME NOW? I STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO COMPARED TO RIKA AND RENA-SAN...

MOMO

YEAH, YEAH! I'M SORRY I UNDER-ESTIMATED YOU... MM!!

THIS IS GOOD...! EVEN THE SIDE DISHES ARE WELL-MADE...YOU'RE NOT A BAD COOK AT ALL, SATOKO...!!

MY MOM USES READY-MADE STUFF TOO. AND SHE USES CANNED FOOD.

IT'S NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF...THIS IS A FINE DINNER.

ALL I MADE MYSELF WAS THE RICE AND THE MISO SOUP...

BUT I'M NOT THAT GOOD... I JUST HEATED UP SOME READY-MADE DISHES...

OH-HO-HO!♡ I'M HONORED BY YOUR COMPLI-MENTS...

...HEH-HEH! WELL, AS LONG AS YOU UNDER-STAND THAT I CAN COOK A LITTLE, THAT'S ENOUGH FOR ME!

WOULD YOU LIKE SECONDS? THERE'S STILL SOME MISO SOUP LEFT!

...SITTING HERE... EATING DINNER LIKE THIS...

AH... SHE'S... BLUSHING ...

HEH HEH

...I MISS HIM...

I WONDER... WHERE HE IS AND WHAT HE'S DOING RIGHT NOW...?

IT'S LIKE EATING DINNER WITH SATOSHI. IT'S FUN.

KOTO (CLUNK)

.....

I WAS SURPRISED THAT A MAN WITH NO ABILITY TO EARN A LIVING HAD THE RESOURCE-FULNESS TO RUN AWAY FROM HOME...

BUT, WELL, OF COURSE HE'LL SHOW UP UNEXPECTEDLY ANY DAY NOW!

OH, I'M SORRY! SATOSHI IS MY NII-NII...

.....

I MEAN!! UM... HE'S MY BROTH-ER!

UH, YEAH... I SEE.

SHE'S PANICKING TO COR-RECT HER-SELF...

...SATOSHI MAY NOT LOOK IT, BUT HE CAN PUT UP WITH A LOT OF THINGS, SIR. LOTS MORE THAN YOU THINK, SATOKO.

WELL! ANY-BODY HIS AGE WOULD DREAM OF LIVING ON HIS OWN! HE WON'T LAST LONG ANYWAY. HE HAS NO ENDURANCE.

RUN AWAY...!

DARN IT...THIS CAN'T BE A VERY GOOD TOPIC...

YOU'RE TOO HARD ON NII-NII. WHEN HE COMES BACK, YOU SHOULD BE NICER TO HIM, SIR.

YOU ALWAYS TAKE NII-NII'S SIDE, RIKA!! YOU SPOIL HIM!

...SATOSHI CAN...

...COME BACK ANY TIME...

SHE'S BEING STRONG, WAITING SO THAT ...

...YOU BOTH ...

...LOVED SATOSHI, HUH?

AND STILL DO.

...I ...HAD THE WRONG IDEA ABOUT YOU. I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE SO STRONG...

YEAH

わしゃ..

WASHA (RUFFLE)

!?

DO YOU... WANT TO SEE YOUR NII-NII, SATOKO?

I...I DON'T CALL HIM NII-NII!! CALL HIM MY BROTHER!!

わしゃ

WASHA

WASHA

わしゃ

...I...

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN STRONG!! I WAS ONLY PLAYING TRICKS ON YOU TO MATCH YOUR LEVEL, KEIICHI-SAN!!

DO YOU WANT TO SEE SATOSHI, SATOKO ?

OF COURSE I WANT TO SEE HIM, OBVIOUSLY ...!

...I WANT YOU TO COME BACK RIGHT NOW.

BUT I'M NOT WEAK, SO YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU WANT UNTIL YOU'RE SATISFIED...

...BUT IN EXCHANGE, WHEN YOU COME BACK... I'LL GIVE YOU EVERY PIECE OF MY MIND!

THEN WE'LL EAT DINNER TOGETHER...

IT'S BEEN ALMOST A YEAR...

AND I'LL LAY OUT THE FUTONS...

THE TRUTH IS...

IF YOU ASK ME IF I WANT TO SEE HIM...

..... O"

WELL! NII-NII CAN DO WHAT-EVER HE WANTS!!

IF HE CAN GET EVEN A *LITTLE* BETTER AT MAKING A LIVING, THEN MY BURDEN WILL BE LIGHTER!

...YOU DID, SIR.

THERE. YOU SAID NII-NII AGAIN.

わはは、はは

WA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA

I DID NOT SAY THAT!!!

IF SATOKO HADN'T COME, YOU'D BE ALL GRUMBLY AND WHINY RIGHT NOW, KEIICHI, SIR.

SHE'S RIGHT! IT'S GOOD I CAME!

THANKS FOR TODAY... YOU REALLY SAVED ME THERE.

...THIS ...REALLY IS HER GOOD MOOD.

PUPU (PFFFT)

GOT IT, SATO-KO!

THERE'S STRAWBERRY JAM IN THE BACK ON THE MIDDLE SHELF OF YOUR FRIDGE! AND THE POWDERED COCOA IS IN THE CUPBOARD ...

OH, YES. I PUT THE LEFT-OVER RICE AND SIDE DISHES IN SOME TUP-PERWARE, SO BRING THAT FOR YOUR LUNCH TOMORROW!

AND YOU CAN HAVE BREAD AND JAM FOR BREAKFAST ...

PACHI (CLAP)

PACHI

PACHI

...YOU GET A PERFECT HUNDRED TODAY, KEIICHI, SIR.

YES, MAAM

GET UP A LITTLE EARLY TO PREPARE YOUR LUNCH!

TA (RUN) TA TA TA

AAA..

RIKA-CHAN? WHAT'S THE MATTER?

...I HOPE... YOU'LL KEEP LETTING SATOKO SCOLD YOU SOMETIMES ...

...I'M SURE THAT SATOKO THOUGHT OF IT LIKE HER NII-NII HAD COME BACK...I THINK SHE ENJOYED HERSELF, SIR.

I...I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WORTH COMPLIMENTING... I ALMOST BURNED MY HOUSE DOWN...

...SATOSHI HAD HIS OWN REASONS, SIR...I'M SURE...

...SO THIS SATOSHI...HE HAS SUCH A GOOD LITTLE SISTER. WHAT DIDN'T HE LIKE ABOUT LIVING WITH HER?

...I HOPE HE COMES BACK SOON ...

I DON'T THINK I CAN SUBSTITUTE FOR HER REAL NII-NII FOREVER, YOU KNOW?

...IT'S OKAY. YOU WERE EXACTLY LIKE SATOSHI TODAY, KEIICHI! WE'LL ASK YOU AGAIN, SIR!

RIIIIKAAA!! WHAT ARE YOU DOING !!?

...WELL, I'LL BE GOING, SIR. GOOD NIGHT, SIR.

G'NIGHT ...!

...IS WORKING SO HARD TO TAKE CARE OF THINGS WHILE YOU'RE GONE.

SATOSHI, YOUR SISTER...

TAKE CARE GOING HOME!!

COME BACK, OKAY ...?

IF YOU TAKE TOO LONG ...

NOW IT'S LUNCH TIME!!

DID YOU ALL MAKE SURE TO BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH TODAY?

RIRIIIN (RRRRRING)

RIIIN

...I'LL BEAT THE CRAP OUT OF YOU ...!

HOW CAN YOU BE SO SOFT!!?

WE'RE GOING TO DO IT, AND WE'RE GOING TO MAKE IT CLEAR AS BLACK AND WHITE!!

...THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION. THE PENALTY GAME MENTIONED YESTERDAY WAS LIKE A WHIP, JUST TO GET KEIICHI TO DO HIS OWN COOKING...

IF KEIICHI-KUN MADE HIS OWN, THEN WOULDN'T IT BE A DRAW?

YUP...!! BUT MII-CHAN... HOW WILL WE DETERMINE THE WINNER IN TODAY'S LUNCH CONTEST ?

HEY, EVERYONE! GATHER 'ROUND!!

TO MAKE THE CONTEST FAIR, WE'LL HAVE THE CLASS DECIDE!

KEH, I KNEW IT.

THE COMPETITIVE MION WOULD NEVER LET IT END HERE ...!!

YEEEEAAAAHHH!

DOOOOON (BOOOOOOM)

ALL RIGHT, EVERY-ONE, READY!!? WE'LL START WITH ME!!

WHAT DO YOU THINK!?

WH-
WHAT THE
HELL!!?

OSECHI!!?

OOOOOH,
AMAAAZING!

おぉぉ
OOOOH!
おいしそー!
LUUUUTE!

THIS
ONE'S
RENA'S!!

おぉぉ
OOOOH!
すごいー
VERY GOOOOD!

THIS
ONE'S
MINE,
SIR.

AND THIS
ONE IS
MINE!

THEY MIGHT
NOT BE AS
GOOD AS RENA'S
AND MION'S,
BUT...THAT'S
INCREDIBLE...!!

RIKA-
CHAN AND
SATOKO!
THEY WENT
HOME THAT
LATE AND
STILL GOT
LUNCHES
READY...!?

...SHARE THEIR LUNCHES WITH US.

OKAMURA

WE HAD OKAMURA-KUN AND TOMITA-KUN...

TOMITA

NIMAAA (BEEEAM)

...ACTUALLY...

SFX: GONYO (MUMBLE) GONYO

OH-HO-HO

SIR

H-HOW DARE THEY...

AAUGH, I'M DES-PERATE!

I JUST PACKED IT LIKE SHE TOLD ME TO. IT'S NOT EVEN A MEAL THAT I MADE...!

IN THE END, MY LUNCH IS THE DINNER SATOKO MADE...

AFTER YOUR LITTLE SHOW YESTERDAY, WE'RE EXPECTING SOMETHING BIG...BUT I WONDER?

NOW!! IT'S FINALLY YOUR TURN, KEI-CHAN!

KGH...!!

SO... HOW IS IT...?

AH-HA-HA-HA! YOU WORKED REALLY HARD, DIDN'T YOU, KEIICHI-KUN? RENA THINKS IT'S AMAZING!

JIMI (PLAIN)

SHIN (SILENCE)

HEH-HEH...IT'S DECIDED, THEN...?

HEH HEH..

HA HA...

.....

YOU SAY IT LACKS IN "HEART"...IN "LOVE"...?

WOULD YOU WAIT A MINUTE... TOMITA-KUN... EVERYONE?

MAEBARA-SAN'S LUNCH HAS POOR PRESENTATION, AND ALL OF THE SIDE DISHES ARE READY-MADE.

HIS LUNCH LACKS IN LOVE AND HEART. YOU COULD SAY THAT ITS CONTENTS ACCURATELY REFLECT THE LACK OF LUNCH-MAKING SENSE OF THE PERSON WHO MADE IT!

ZUBAN!! (BLUNT!)

DOOOHHH!

I SEE!! BUT IF COOKING COULD BE DECIDED WITH HEART ALONE, WE WOULDN'T NEED CHEFS!

THAT'S RIGHT!! IF A CHEF SAID, "I PUT A LOT OF HEART IN IT" AND BROUGHT YOU A CHARRED HAMBURGER. COULD YOU PAY MONEY FOR THAT!?

DOOOHH!

AND YOU SAY *THAT'S* NOT HEART !!?

TAKE A LOOK AT THIS SCAR!!!

I GOT THIS WHILE COOKING YESTERDAY!! I'M A BAD COOK, BUT I FOUGHT!! I DIDN'T RUN AWAY!!

MEANIE!!

BOOOOO!

IT ONLY GAINS MEANING WHEN THE LOVE COMES ACROSS!! ***IT DOES NOT COME ACROSS*** FROM YOUR LUNCH, MAEBARA-SAN!!!

TO BEGIN WITH, A LUNCHBOX IS LOVE MADE SOLID IN THE FORM OF A MEAL!

OOOHH!

THE GIRLS

BUT THAT WOULD BE THE CONSIDERATE THING TO DO!! EVEN IF THE HAMBURGER IS BLACKENED, IF IT WOULD SHOW ME WHAT HARDSHIPS MY MOTHER WENT THROUGH TO MAKE IT...*I WOULD EAT IT!!*

THE PROSECUTION HAS STATED THAT "THE FEELINGS OF THE SENDER HAVE NO BEARING ON DETERMINING THE VALUE"...AM I CORRECT?

YOU'RE SOFT, SOFT, TOMITA-KUN...

YES!!!

HOW MUCH MANGA COULD I BUY WITH THAT!!? IT WOULD BE BLISS!! LIFE WOULD BE COMPLETE!!

FOR EXAMPLE, IF I COULD GET AN UNEVEN HANDMADE SWEATER OR A TEN THOUSAND YEN BOOKSTORE GIFT CERTIFICATE, I WOULD OBVIOUSLY CHOOSE THE GIFT CERTIFICATE!!

YOU'RE DEAD WRONG!!!

YES!!! YOU CAN'T COMPARE THOSE TWO THINGS!! WHATEVER THE HANDMADE LUNCH MAY BE LIKE, IT EXPRESSES SO MUCH HEART IT COULD NEVER COMPARE TO SOMETHING YOU JUST *BOUGHT!!* AND THAT IS GIVEN VALUE!

IN OTHER WORDS! THE HEART OF A HANDMADE LUNCH *DOES* COME ACROSS!! **ADMIT IT!!!!**

DOOOOON (BOOOOOM)

IF YOU THINK YOU CAN BEAT ME AT A CONTEST OF WORDS...

THEN LET ME ASK THE PROSECUTION! IF I, MAEBARA, HAD BEEN COMPARING *THIS LUNCH AND A LUNCH FROM A CONVENIENCE STORE ...*

...THEY WOULD HAVE THE SAME VALUE...?

ERK

おおおおお

DOOHHH!

THIS IS...!

コレは...!

MEW?

AND I PRESENT OKAMURA-KUN'S LUNCH AS EVIDENCE!! *BEHOLD!!!*

ERK...

I...I ADMIT IT...

THEN I CALL... MS. RIKA FURUDE AS A WITNESS.

おおおお!

OOOOHHHH!

IF WE TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION HER NEGLECT OF THIS CONTEST'S MAIN PREREQUISITE, THAT YOU COOK IT YOURSELF... RIKA-CHAN IS DISQUALIFIED... YOU LOSE!!

OOOOHHHH!

おお!

HEH-HEH... I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD GET TO SEE SUCH A TURNABOUT HERE TODAY ...!!

おおおお!

THE INSIDE. IT'S EXACTLY THE SAME... IT CAN'T BE.

OOOOHHH

YES!! MS. RIKA FURUDE'S LUNCH WAS STOLEN FROM OKAMURA-KUN!! THERE'S NO WAY THERE WOULD BE ANY HEART IN SUCH A THING!!!

GOOD JOB, KEI-ICHI.

おい

...DON'T THINK POORLY OF ME, RIKA-CHAN...OUR CLUB ACTIVITIES ARE HEART-LESS...

OOOOHH

おい!

H-HMPH. I'M SURPRISED YOU AVOIDED LAST PLACE WITH SUCH A DREADFUL LUNCH AS THIS ONE...

OF COURSE I'M NOT IN LAST PLACE. WHERE IN THIS LUNCH DO YOU SEE ANYTHING THAT WOULD PUT ME IN LAST?

DIDN'T I SAY? *HEART* IS WHAT'S IMPORTANT...

BESIDES, IF IT DIDN'T TASTE GOOD, I WOULDN'T HAVE MADE A LUNCH OUT OF IT!

B-BUT, BUT!! IT'S...ALL READY-MADE DISHES AND CANNED FOOD...AND POORLY PRESENTED ...

AND IT... TASTES FUNNY...

KUSHA (RUFFLE)

EEHH !!?

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, RENA!? THIS LUNCH IS ALL MY FAVORITES!! I'M NOT SHARING!! AND HEY, IT'S *MY* LUNCH!!

HEE-HEE-HEE...!! RENA WANTS TO EAT THE LUNCH SATOKO MADE TOO!

ARROW: FACULTY ROOM

EH? REALLY? IN THAT CASE...

...ACTUALLY, ME TOO...!! I HAD TOMITA-SAN SHARE HIS LUNCH WITH ME TOO...

GUI (WIPE)

...UM!

I CAN'T LET RIKA GO ALONE!! I'D GO WITH HER TO THE DEPTHS OF HELL!!

NOW!! LET'S GO TO THE PLACE OF EXECUTION!!

...SEE? SATOKO REALLY IS A DUMMY, SIR.

ALL RIGHT!! MION!! I CONFESS!! I DIDN'T MAKE MY LUNCH EITHER!! I'M OFF!!

EEHH!? YOU TOO, KEI-CHAN?

WHAT'S GOING ON!!?

NEVER MIND US...THIS COULD BE BIG TROUBLE FOR YOU, KEIICHI-SAN!! ...UGH!

WHA...!! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!!? YOU WON...! THERE'S A LIMIT TO HOW MORBIDLY CURIOUS A PERSON CAN BE!!

YOU JUST SMILE AND NOD AT WHATEVER I SAY, KEIICHI-SAN! RIKA AND I WILL TAKE CARE OF THIS!!

HA-HA-HA!! NO KIDDING!

...SATOKO'S STIR-FRY IS VERY YUMMY, SIR.

HEY, SATOKO. I WANNA EAT SOME VEGETABLE STIR-FRY... COULD YOU MAKE ME SOME?

WHAAA!? UM...WELL... THERE'S NOTHING I CAN'T DO IF I TRY HARD ENOUGH.

ALL RIGHT, IT'S DECIDED!

SIGN: FACULTY ROOM

...AND GO TO THE SUPER-MARKET!!

GASHI (CLASP)

WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS ALIVE ...

GARA (SLIDE)

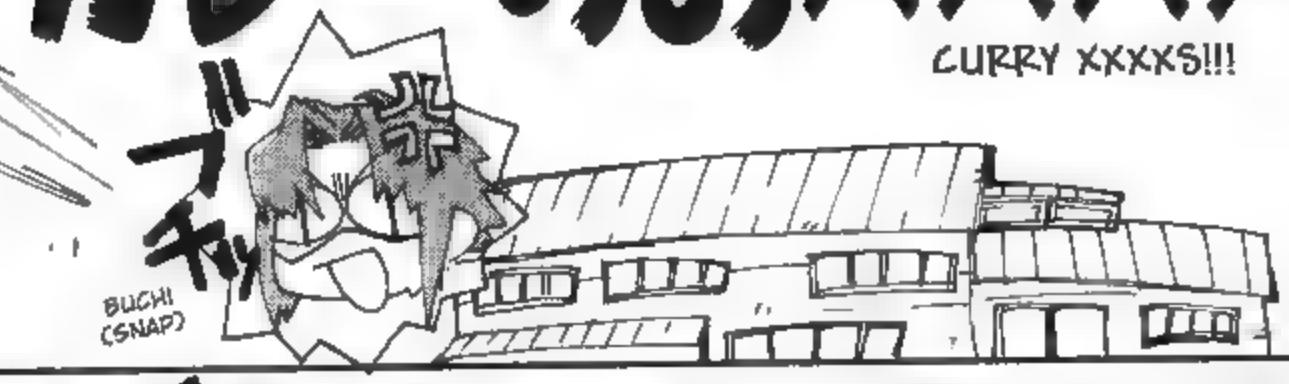
OH...? MAEBARA-KUN? GIRLS? WHAT'S THE MAT-TER?

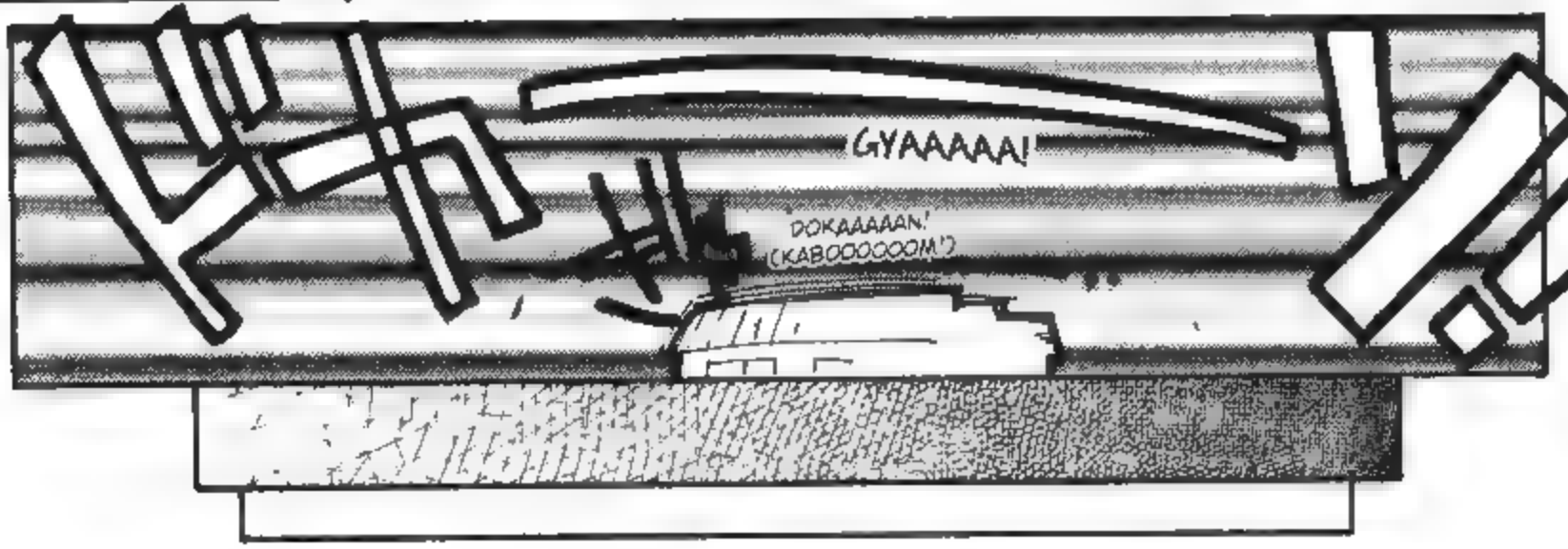
I WORRY FOR YOUR FUTURE...!!

HONESTLY...

カレーのおXXXXX!!!

CURRY XXXXS!!!





YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH ECONOMICAL SENSE, KEIICHI-SAN!! IF WE BUY THAT, WE'LL GO OVER!
HEY! SINCE WE'RE BUYING STUFF ANYWAY, HOW ABOUT THIS ECONOMY PACK?
OH! I'M INTRIGUED BY SOME OF THE STUFF IN THIS CHEESE ONE TOO.
IT'S HALF-PRICE TIME!
AH!!
OH NO! IF WE DON'T HURRY, THEY'LL RUN OUT OF HALF-PRICED PORK!!
EH!?
COME ON! DON'T STICK TO THE GLASS LIKE YOU CAN'T STAND TO LEAVE!
AWW, YOU'RE TOO STRICT, SATOKO!
ZURU (DRAG)
ZURU

IT'S GOOD! IT REALLY IMPROVES THE MEAL !!

RIGHT, RIGHT!! THIS IS THE VEGETABLE STIR-FRY I WAS HOPING FOR!

NO, IT WILL!! THE FRESH FLAVOR FROM WHEN IT'S JUST FINISHED STARTS TO FADE FAST THE MINUTE IT'S DONE!!

NOW, NOW, KEIICHI-SAN!! YOU'RE SPILLING!! YOU DON'T HAVE TO HURRY SO MUCH. IT'S NOT GOING TO RUN AWAY!

AH-HA-HA-HA! YOU'RE RIGHT! SORRY, SORRY!

KNOWING THAT'S HOW YOU FEEL IS ENOUGH!

SO PLEASE CALM DOWN A LITTLE WHILE YOU EAT!

THEN WHADDAYA WANT ME TO CALL IT? THE BATHROOM? THE COMMODE? THE JOHN?

EXCUSE ME, KEIICHI-SAN! WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF DINNER... THAT'S BAD MANNERS!!

NGH.

PIKU PIKU CWINCE

GAAHH!

I WOLFED IT DOWN *TOO* FAST. I'M GOING TO THE CRAPPER.

GACHA (KACHAK)

GA HA HA

BI (POINT)

GOKUN (CLANG)

DOOH-HO-HO-HO!

SEE!! SEE!! I KNEW YOU'D FALL INTO MY TRAP SOON. ♡

WHY, YOU LITTLE ...!! I LET MY GUARD DOWN FOR A SECOND ...!!

OKAY? SO GOD IN HEAVEN...

I WON'T DO A SINGLE BAD THING.

...IF IT MEANT THESE DAYS WOULD GO ON FOREVER.

I WOULD DO ANYTHING...

AH-HA-HA-HA-HA

...WILL GO ON FOREVER, AND NEVER END...?

HO (GASP!)

...IF YOU'RE THERE... WILL YOU MAKE THIS DREAM COME TRUE?

MY DREAM THAT THIS TIME...

!!

ガチャ GACHA (CLICK)

HELLO?

OH, IT'S THE PHONE.

NN? YOU'RE RIGHT.

JIRIRIRIRIIIN (BRRRRRRING)

WAS IT YOUR PARENTS, KEIICHI-SAN...?

...YEAH. THEY SAY THEY'RE COMING BACK TOMOR-ROW...

...MM... GOT IT...

ガチャ GACHA

YOUR FAMILY CAN EAT AROUND THE TABLE WITH NO OUTSIDERS!

OH, MY! THAT'S GREAT. THAT MEANS I WON'T HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF YOU AND MAKE SURE YOU GET DINNER TOMORROW!

.....

AND I... IT WAS JUST TWO DAYS, YESTERDAY AND TODAY... BUT I HAD A LOT OF FUN AT DINNER...

WHAT MORE COULD YOU ASK FOR!!? OBVIOUSLY A DINNER TABLE SURROUNDED BY YOUR FAMILY IS THE MOST FUN YOU COULD HAVE!

WHEN I THINK THAT TOMORROW I'LL BE STARTING THOSE BORING OLD DINNERS AGAIN..

... IT'S NOT *THAT* GREAT ..

EH?

...IN THAT CASE ...

NEXT TIME, I'LL GO TO *YOUR* HOUSE, SATOKO!

WELL, THAT'S TRUE!! MAYBE IT WOULD BE GOOD TO USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO GET YOU TO LEARN SOME COOKING, KEIICHI-SAN!

...I NEED YOU TO TEACH ME A LOT ABOUT COOKING, SATOKO!! I FINALLY MASTERED THE RICE COOKER, AFTER ALL!

DOESN'T BOTHER ME. BESIDES ...

OH... B-BUT MY HOUSE IS SMALL AND DIRTY.

I ALMOST ACCIDENTALLY CALLED MYSELF HER NII-NII.

OOPS!!

NO COMPLAINING!! YOUR NI...

TAKE THAT!

I'LL BE FINE! IF ANY BAD PEOPLE SHOW UP, I CAN TAKE CARE OF THEM WITH ONE FINGER..

WELL, I'LL TAKE YOU UP NEAR THE SCHOOL. ONCE WE GET THERE, THERE ARE A LOT OF LIGHTS OUTSIDE...

SFX: WASHA (RUFFLE) WASHA

...

NII-NII...

AH!! UM... Y-YOU JUST LOOKED LIKE MY BROTHER IS ALL, KEIICHI-SAN!

YOU'RE NOTHING ALIKE...JUST SOMETIMES, YOU'RE A LOT ALIKE. OOH-HO-HO!

EH!? DID YOU JUST...?

?

.....

...RIKA... ASKED YOU TO SUBSTITUTE FOR NII-NII, DIDN'T SHE...?

コツン KOTSUN (KNOCK)

STUPID.

PLEASE DON'T BE OFFENDED... RIKA WORRIES TOO MUCH ABOUT ME...IT DOESN'T BOTHER ME THAT HE'S GONE.

YOU'RE THINK-ING TOO HARD...

I'M ME. KEIICHI MAEBARA.

I'M NOT YOUR BROTHER SATOSHI HOJO.

HEY, SATOSHI...

...HEY, SATOSHI.

I DON'T WANT TO SEE SATOKO...

HEY, SATOSHI... WHERE DID YOU GO OFF TO...? COME BACK ALREADY...

...LOOKING SO LONELY...

CHAPTER 4

THEY'RE PROBABLY OFF PLAYING SOMEWHERE, THE FOUR OF THEM, ABOUT NOW...

TCH... HERE IT'S SATURDAY... AND I GET STUCK AT A PARTY FOR THE PEOPLE INVOLVED WITH DAD'S WORK...

GAYA

GAYA

GAYA (CLAMOR)

KACHA (CLICK)

HELLO!? IT'S ME!

COMING!

OH! IS IT FROM THEM? I MIGHT GET AN EXCUSE TO GET OUT OF THIS PARTY...!

KEIICHI! YOUR FRIEND'S ON THE PHONE!

WHAT KIND OF ART IS DAD MAKING...? HIS WORK-SHOP IS ALWAYS SEALED OFF...

NOT THAT I CARE...

It's not that, Keiichi-san.

I DON'T WANNA GET THAT FROM *YOU*...ER, SATOKO!? WHAT'S UP!? SOME TROUBLE AT CLUB!?

"Hello it's me!" is no way to answer the phone, Keiichi-san! You need to study your etiquette!!

I'll explain the details when I see you! Anyway... this is an absolute crisis!!!

If this keeps up, we'll lose!!

DON'T TELL ME...A FIGHT!?

THAT DOESN'T SOUND GOOD!! WHAT'S THE SITUATION!?

SHOW-DOWN ...!!?

We're not doing club activities today! It's a real show-down!!

That will be a big help! We'll be wait-ing!

SHOULD I BRING A WEAPON!? A METAL BAT OR SOME-THING!?

GOT IT!!

BUT IF THEY LAY A HAND ON MY HINAMI-ZAWA FRIENDS ...

I DON'T KNOW WHO IT IS...

The field at Okinomiya Elementary!! Anyway, get here as fast as you can!!

WHERE ARE YOU!?

YEAH!! GOT IT!! I'LL BE RIGHT THERE TO BACK YOU UP!!

ANYTHING LONG?

IF ANYTHING LONG WILL DO, THEN... MY GOLF CLUBS ARE IN THE SHED...?

EH... JUST A... KEI-ICHI!?

THANKS! I'LL BORROW ONE!! I'VE GOT A LITTLE SOMETHING I NEED TO DO!

OH, KEIICHI! I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU. XO-SAN, HERE, FROM OX PUBLISHING SAYS HE'D LOVE FOR HIS NEXT COPY MAGAZINE TO—

NEVER MIND THAT, DAD!! DO WE HAVE A BAT!!? A METAL BAT! IF WE DON'T... ANYTHING LONG WILL WORK!

GACHAN (CLICK')

THERE IS A LIMIT TO WHAT'S FINE WITH ME!!!

WAIT FOR ME! SATOKO!!!

SIGN: SONOZAKI BREAD

SIGN: SOM AHEAD

OKINOMIYA

園崎パン

50

WAAAH! WAAAH!

KI (SCREE)

SO... ELEMENTARY, ELEMENTARY ...

ALL RIGHT...! I GOT HERE WITHOUT GETTING LOST! IT'S A LITTLE MORE URBAN HERE, SO IT'S EASIER TO FIGURE OUT.

HAA (HUFF)

HAA

WAH!

SIGN: OKINOMIYA BLEM—

THIS IS THE PLACE !!

ZAH (WHOOSH)

GUYS!! SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING !!!

WHO'S THAT...?

ZAWA

HE'S THE SLUGGER TO RIVAL KAMEDA-KUN...!?

ZAWA (MURMUR)

KEIICHI-KU...

KEI-CHA ...

YOUR "POWER-FUL BACK-UP"...!?

EH?

ARMBAND SPORTS

SFX: VRAAA (BEEFAM)

KAK!!!!!N
CTHHHHWWWACK!)

KEI-CHAN... WHAT'S... WITH THE GOLF CLUB?

RIGHT FIELD, RIGHT FIELD!!

WHAT'S WITH THAT KID?

I DUNNO.

WAAAH WAAAH!

ARMBAND: SPOR— ARMBAND: PRESS

...SA...

SA-TOKO!!! IF YOU MEANT A BASE-BALL GAME, YOU SHOULD HAVE SAID SO TO BEGIN WITH !!!

EEEEHN!!? DIDN'T I!!? IN THE FIRST PLACE, IF I TELL YOU TO COME TO THE FIELD WITH A BAT, WHAT WOULD YOU THINK OF *OTHER* THAN BASE-BALL!!?

UH... UM, LOOK... I'M SURE KEIICHI-KUN...

!?

ZUBAAAN (CAAATCH)

...ERK... A GLOOMY MOOD, HUH? SO YOU'RE LOSING THE GAME...?

NO... RENA...YOU DON'T HAVE TO...MAKE EXCUSES FOR ME...

I'M SURE HE CAME ALL THIS WAY TO CHEER UP THE TEAM FROM THEIR GLOOMY MOOD! I'M SURE!

NIYAAA (LEEEER)

SHUUUUU (SSSSHHH)

STRIKE

Titans

WHAT THE HELL IS THAT TERRIFY-INGLY FAST PITCH!!?

YEAH

WHA!?

SCOREBOARD: HINAMIZAWA 1 SCOREBOARD: OKINOMIYA T

WE WERE IN THE LEAD AT FIRST! THANKS TO MII-CHAN'S HOME RUN!

IT'S THIS MONTH'S GAME BETWEEN THE HINAMIZAWA FIGHTERS AND THE OKINOMIYA TITANS. TO PUT IT SIMPLY, IT'S LIKE A SCHOOL GAME...BUT IT'S FRIENDLY.

SO WE'RE HERE AS PINCH HITTERS.

YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT... UNTIL *HE* CAME IN...

KI (GLARE)

A KOUSHIEN PITCHER TRESPASSING ON A GRASS-LOT BASEBALL GAME... IT'S NOT FAIR!!

SHUN (GLOOM)

IS THAT WHY THERE ARE REPORTERS HERE?

HE'S THE ACE FROM OOSHIMA, THE PREFECTURAL HIGH SCHOOL THAT'S ALWAYS IN KOUSHIEN. HE USED TO BE ON THE OKINOMIYA TITANS.

HE JUST HAPPENED TO COME TO WATCH TODAY...

I SEE... SO HE JUMPED IN BECAUSE HIS OLD TEAM WAS LOSING...

THEN ALL AT ONCE, WE'RE LOSING...

がんばれ！雪見沢ファイターズ!!

THIS IS... MY FIRST GAME... AND MY PARENTS ARE EVEN HERE...

MAEBARA-SAN...!!!

GUSU (SNIFFLE)

OKAMURA-KUN, TOMITA-KUN! THE SKIN ON YOUR HANDS IS SO WORN OUT...YOU REALLY PRACTICED ...!!

SIGN: GO FOR IT! HINAMIZAWA FIGHTERS!!

IS HE... PITCHING SERIOUSLY AGAINST THESE GUYS...?

...YES.

...

...BAAAAAN

STRIKE! OUT!!

THEN...

...WE'LL JUST HAVE TO GO AT THIS LIKE A REAL FIGHT...!!!

RENA... THINKS THIS IS IMMATURE.

KYU (CLENCH)

!!

IN THAT CASE...YOU MUST HAVE SOME TRAP SET UP...!!!

BY THE WAY, SATOKO IS THE LAST BATTER.

INCIDENTALLY, WE'RE IN THE BOTTOM OF THE NINTH, AND LOSING BY ONE POINT.

...!...

ONE POINT, HUH...? IN THAT CASE, IF THE NEXT BATTER CAN GET ON BASE...WE CAN GO FOR A GAME-ENDING HOME RUN ...!

...
HAVE A PLAN...!!

NIYARI (LEER)

SA-TOKO BEING THE LAST AT BAT ...

MY COMING HERE LATE...

THEM LOSING BY ONE POINT...

IT'S LIKE SHE CAL-CULATED IT AND HAD IT ALL SET UP...

HEH... SATO-KO... A GIRL TO BE FEARED ...

SU (55)

AND KAMEDA-KUN GOING TO THE BATHROOM DURING TIME-OUT...

HEH-HEH... I WONDERED WHO'D COME IN HERE...

IF IT ISN'T THE GREAT PINCH HITTER... HEH-HEH-HEH.

...WILL MAE-BARA-SAN BE OKAY...? CAN HE REALLY... CAPTURE THAT PITCHER...?

MIIIN CHUUMMMM

MIN

MIN

SO YOU GUYS CAN'T SENSE ANYTHING, LIVING LIFE IN THE SAME CLASS AS KEI-CHAN?

AH HA HA!!

.....

... SORRY. I COULDN'T REALLY HEAR YOU. SAY IT AGAIN ...?

WELL, JUST WATCH!

WHA...!? THINK BEFORE YOU TALK STUPID!!! LET YOU WIN!? ARE YOU CRAZY!?

I'VE GIVEN YOU OUR DEMANDS. WHAT'S YOUR ANSWER? YES OR NO?

I WANT YOU TO...

...LET US WIN.

...I'LL ONLY SAY IT ONE MORE TIME.

THAT'S OBVIOUS!! PRICELESS AND ABSOLUTE...THE SUPREME GOAL!! NOTHING ELSE COULD REPLACE IT!!

KAMEDA-KUN. WHAT IS VICTORY TO YOU?

I DON'T EVEN NEED TO *THINK* ABOUT THAT ONE!! WHO WOULD LET YOU WIN!!? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT IN THE HEAD!?

Titans

OF COURSE IT IS!! NOTHING YOU COULD THREATEN ME OR BRIBE ME WITH WOULD EVER BE ENOUGH TO MAKE ME ABANDON VICTORY!

HEH-HEH-HEH... THAT'S A VERY SPORTSMANLIKE ANSWER... SO VICTORY IS ABSOLUTE, AND NOTHING CAN REPLACE IT.

...MY ALLURING PROPOSITION!!

...BUT YOU STOPPED WALKING, KAMEDA-KUN!!! YOU'RE... ANTICIPATING...

...SO.

HEH-HEH... YOU DENY IT WITH YOUR LIPS...

W-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT!? THAT'S STUPID!! NO SUCH THING EXISTS !!!

...IT WOULD MAKE YOU GIVE UP YOUR PRECIOUS VICTORY!!?

THEN SHOULDN'T YOU ASK!? WHAT I MIGHT OFFER YOU THAT'S SO VALUABLE ...

I UNDERSTAND YOU SAID IN A MAGAZINE INTERVIEW THAT YOUR FAVORITE FOOD IS MEAT AND THAT YOU HATE ANYTHING SWEET... WAS THAT TRUE...?

WH... WHAT !!?

FOR EXAMPLE... SAY YOU WENT OUT TO AN ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT MEAT BUFFET. JUST WHAT WOULD YOU PUT ON YOUR PLATE? SIRLOIN? RIBS? THAT'S NOT IT, IS IT?

IT WOULD BE SOMETHING THAT WOULD MAKE A GIRL VERY HAPPY... SOMETHING CUTE AND PRETTY... YOU LOVE ***WESTERN DESSERTS,*** DON'T YOU !!?

SAAAAA (DRAAAA N.

INFORMATION FROM ONE OF HINAMIZAWA'S THREE FAMILIES, THE SONOZAKI FAMILY.

WE HAVE A YAKINIKU FRANCHISE (AND MANY OTHERS) IN SHISHIBONE. ♡

PLEASE STOP BY SOME TIME. ♡

NO!!! WHAT I LOVE IS HEARTY, BONY —

NO!!! WHAT YOU LOVE IS ***DESSERT...*** PRESENTED GENTLY AND BEAUTIFULLY, WITH MULTI-COLORED CREAM!!!

LIKE IT'S DECORATED WITH FRILLS AND RIBBONS...THE KIND THAT SUGGESTS A PURE, INNOCENT GIRL...A DESSERT LIKE A CLEAR YOUNG GIRL... AND A PIMPLY, GLUTTONOUS SPORTS FREAK EATS IT **AS IF DEFILING IT!!** **MUNCHING AND CRUNCHING!**

UWAAAHHH! DON'T SAY IT!!!

YOU IDIOT!!! DON'T TREAT LIFE SO LIGHTLY!!

THAT'S RIGHT!! YOU DON'T EAT IT OUT OF YOUR LOVE OF DESSERTS!! YOU DEFILE IT, TRAMPLE IT DOWN, CHEW IT UNTIL THERE'S NOTHING LEFT!!! YOU JUST ENJOY DEFILING IT!!!

GYAAAA!

MY SECRET PLEASURE IS FOUND OUT! AAAHH!!! IS DEATH MY ONLY OPTION !!?

BACHHHHHN (KAPOOOOW)

SU (PLACE)

EEP!

GYAAA!

THAT'S RIGHT. YOU ARE A PERVERT.

NNNGH...I MUST BE THE ONLY ONE IN THE WORLD... WHO THINKS LIKE THAT WHILE EATING DESSERT... I'M...A PERVERT...

EH?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH A MAN BEING A PERVERT?

TAKE STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE!!

THAT'S RIGHT!! AND YOU'VE DEEPLY IMPRESSED ME!!! THANKS TO MY ENCOUNTER WITH YOU!!! I WILL SURELY BE ABLE TO TASTE THE DIFFERENT FLAVORS OF DESSERT DIFFERENTLY STARTING TOMORROW!!!

MEN OUGHT TO BE ***PERVERTED!!!*** BUT DEPENDING ON ***WHETHER OR NOT A MAN ACCEPTS THAT,*** THE ***CHARACTER*** OF THE MAN IS LIKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ***HEAVEN AND EARTH!!*** YOU WERE HONEST WITH YOURSELF! YOU SHOULD BE PROUD!!! ***PROUD!!!***

LUST

"ALL I HAVE IS STRAWBERRIES... THIS IS ALL I CAN PREPARE FOR YOU, BUT PLEASE SAVOR IT." THAT ***MODESTY*** IS EXCELLENT...!!! NNNGH...I'M IN ***LUST!***

*THE SIMPLICITY OF STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE... SOMEHOW OLD-FASHIONED... WILL MAKE ME THINK OF A **TRADITIONAL MAID...!!***

TH-THE DENT AFTER TAKING THE **STRAWBERRY ...!!!!**

N-NO, RATHER, GULPING... THE DENT LEFT AFTER TAKING THE STRAWBERRY OFF IS REALLY HOT. IF I RUN MY TONGUE OVER IT...OH, WHAT WOULD THAT TASTE LIKE...?

HUFF-HUFF-HUFF...

*AND TO EAT IT LIKE AN ELEGANT NOBLEMAN... NO, NO!! TO **DEVOUR** IT LIKE HER **VULGAR, GREASY, EVIL MASTER!** IS THAT SO WILD...!!?*

*IT'S EXACTLY BECAUSE THERE'S NOTHING BUT STRAWBERRIES...THAT THE **SOFTLY** EMPHASIZED **CREAM** DECORATIONS ARE LIKE TEMPORARY **FRILLS** AND LACE...*

I... I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY-MORE!!! ON MY WAY HOME, I'M GOING TO ANGEL MORT TO HAVE A SHORT-CAKE AS MY *PLAY-THING* UNTIL I GET TIRED OF IT. HEH HEH HEH...!!

THE *GIRLS* WHO DRESSED UP SO BEAUTIFULLY JUST FOR ME... EE-HEE-HEE...THE GIRLS HUDDLED TOGETHER AND TREMBLING...ONE BY ONE, HEH-HEH-HEH!! AFTER I EAT EACH ONE, I'LL *STROKE MY CHIN...LIKE THIS*...AND SAY, "WHO WILL I TAKE NEXT...?"

HEH HEH HEH

AS IF TO SHOW THEM WHO'S BOSS...!! *STROKING YOUR CHIN...*

GOKURI (GULP)

*READ "GIRL" AS "CAKE"

LET US WIN.

KAMEDA, I'LL SAY IT ONE MORE TIME.

I GUESS I'LL GO TO ANGEL MORT AND *PIG OUT* ON THE *GOTHIC LOLITA* GIRLS IN THEIR *FRILLS* AND *RIBBONS*. FORTUNATELY, I HAVE TWO ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT COUPONS.

NITAAA.. (LEER..)

GUH HYA HYA HYA

FORGET IT. WE LOST THIS GAME! LOST!!!! GET IT OVER WITH...

ERK!! BUT THAT'S ...

NEVER MIND!! I WON'T ASK YOU!!!

KH!!!!

I'VE SPENT THIS TIME THINKING I WAS MESSED UP SOMEHOW, HIDING IT BUT STILL ENJOYING IT...

I'VE NEVER MET... ANYONE LIKE YOU BEFORE ...

I WAS WRONG!

YOU'RE A MAN WHO SHOULD HOLD HIS HEAD HIGH!!! NOW!! GIVE ME YOUR HAND!!!

WHAT ARE YOU HESITATING FOR, SHORTY!!? I TOLD YOU, DIDN'T I!!? WHETHER OR NOT YOU ADMIT IT DETERMINES WHAT KIND OF MAN YOU ARE!!

GWASHI (CLASP)

IT'S ALL ACCORDING TO PLAN...

ZAWA

JIRI (CRUNCH)

KH...

WHAT'S WRONG, KAMEDA-KUN? YOU'RE OFF YOUR GAME TODAY.

ARE YOU THAT AFRAID OF THE STRIKE ZONE? DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE GOING TO WALK ME.

ZAWA (MURMUR)

ZUBAN (CATCH)

KH!

ARE YOU AFRAID, KAMEDA-KUN!!? I MISJUDGED YOU!

ZAWA

BALL FOUR!

MAEBARA-KUN'S ON BASE!!

WHAT'S GOING ON!!!?

OH HO HO HO!

TO TE TE (PATTER PATTER)

NOW I'LL GET A BIG HOME RUN AND WIN THE GAME!

SFX: GA (WHACK)

KEEP IT UP, JUST LIKE THAT ...!!

HEH-HEH... GOOD WORK, KAMEDA-KUN.

K-SAN... THIS IS WHAT YOU WANTED, RIGHT...?

ZUBAAAAAAAN

HAAA (SIGH)

NO IE KA-MEMA-KUN

WHERE TO SAY SOME-THING LIKE THIS NOW

YOU'VE STRUCK OUT EVERY TIME UP UNTIL NOW...

ZUBAN! (CATCH)

THAT GIRL'S STRUCK OUT EVERY TIME SHE'S BEEN AT BAT.

HMM.... SATO-MO...

YOU REALLY ARE INCRED-IBLE.

AWWW. HERE MAE-BARA-KUN ACTUALLY GOT ON BASE BUT NOW IT'S ALL OVER.

SIGN: GO FOR IT! HINAMIZAWA FIGHTERS!

...IT WOULDN'T BE ODD AT ALL!

HERE'S YOUR CHANCE. I'LL PITCH THE NEXT ONE UNDER-HAND AND SLOW.

THERE'S NO POINT IN PITCHING SERIOUSLY TO A KID LIKE YOU...

...LEAD-ING UP TO THIS TURN AT BAT !!

NI (GRIND

YES. IT WAS ALL A STRAT-EGY

KAKKIIIIIIN
(CRRRRRACK)

OOOH-HO-HO-HO! SECOND BASE IS *THAT* WAY, KEIICHI-SAN! ♡

...THIS GIRL IS INCREDIBLE ...!!

I MAY HAVE SEEN IT COMING, BUT...

POKAAAAN (GAAAAPE)

SATOKO... YOU'RE... REALLY GOOD AT BASE-BALL, AREN'T YOU...?

WAAAH!

YOU DID IT!! BOTH OF YOU!!

HUH...? I FEEL LIKE I'VE SEEN HIM BEFORE ...

HMMM...

COACH!! WE WON!! YOU'LL KEEP YOUR PROMISE, RIGHT?

SATOKO-CHAN... THAT WAS INCREDIBLE!! GOOD JOB!

I NEVER THOUGHT WE'D REALLY WIN...

NIKO (SMILE)

MAEBARA-SAN.

HUH? YOU KNOW COACH, KEI-CHAN?

YES. MAEBARA-SAN CAME TO MY CLINIC THE OTHER DAY.

AH!! AT THE CLINIC...!?

YOU MUSTN'T TALK TOO LONG WITH THE PATIENTS. NOW, MAEBARA-SAN, PLEASE STEP INTO THE EXAMINATION ROOM.

IT LOOKS LIKE YOU GOT OVER YOUR COLD! I'M GLAD!!

UH, HELLO. KEIICHI MAEBARA.

WELL THEN, LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF AGAIN...

I'M IRIE, THE DOCTOR AT IRIE CLINIC AND COACH OF THE HINAMIZAWA FIGHTERS.

HMM.

SAWA (TOUCH)

SAWA

SAWA

GYU (SQUEEZE)

SAWA

SAWA

SAWA

SAWA

SUCH SILKY SMOOTH HANDS... WITH SUCH FINE TEXTURE, AND SO WELL-KEPT...I'LL HAVE TO GIVE STRICT ORDERS TO MY MAIDS TO MAINTAIN THEIR HANDS THIS WELL...

OOOHH, TO BE SERVED WITH SUCH SILKY SMOOTH HANDS... AAAH!

SAWA

SAWA

SAWA

SAWA

COACH!! DON'T CHANGE THE SUBJECT! YOU PROMISED!!!

AH-HA-HA, KEIICHI-KUN, YOUR FACE IS PALE! COACH IS A LITTLE STRANGE, BUT HE'S A VERY GOOD PERSON!

PROM-ISED?

YES, OF COURSE I'LL KEEP MY PROM-ISE AT TOMOR-ROW'S VICTORY PARTY

Y... YEAH.

WHAT'S WITH THIS GUY ...?

WHA !?

GAN (CLANG)

WHERE DID THAT ..!!?

STOP GOOFING AROUND, COACH!!!

SFX: PACHIN (SNAP)

THIS...

YAAAY!

I SEE.

...WE'LL CELEBRATE WITH THE HIGHEST QUALITY MEAT!!

THAT MEAT IS MINE!!

...IS WHY THEY COULDN'T LOSE!!

(SIZZZLE)

RENA WON'T LOSE EITHER!

OHO!! I WON'T LOSE!!

!!

THIS HOT, HOT PUMPKIN IS FOR YOU, SATOKO.

スイッチ
SWITCH: ON
ON☆
OHHHH!
SATOKO-CHAN, YOU'RE ADOW-ABLE...!!!!
WAAAH! RENA, RENA!
EVERY-ONE'S BEING MEAN TO ME!!
MEWI
SUPAPAPAPAAAN KAPO-PO-PO-POOW)
YORO (STAGGER)
ETO...
...MAN...!
AH-HA-HA-HA-HA

WHEN YOU SEE SATOKO-CHAN SMILING...

...COACH...

SHE SEEMS TO BE ENJOYING HERSELF.

スッ

SFX: SU (STAND)

AHHAHAHA

...DOESN'T IT FEEL LIKE YOUR HEART IS BEING CLEANSED?

BUT THAT SIDE OF HER IS VERY CUTE TOO.

HEH-HEH. SATOKO WOULD PROBABLY GET MAD TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT.

Y-YOU THINK SO? I DON'T THINK YOU COULD WASH EVEN ONE PLATE WITH HER SMILE.

!?

I'M THINKING I'LL *PROPOSE* WHEN SHE GROWS UP.

NIPA (BEAM)

YES, I DO LIKE HER. I LIKE HER A LOT.

LOOKS LIKE YOU REALLY LIKE SATOKO, COACH.

PR-PROPOSE !?

EEEEHHH!!?

OH? YOU'RE SURPRISED ?

COULD IT BE YOU HAVE YOUR EYE ON SATOKO-CHAN TOO, MAEBARA-SAN?

...IF I HAD TO SAY, SA-TOKO-CHAN'S BROTHER WAS MORE THE DOCILE, SCHOLARLY TYPE.

AH-HA-HA...NO, I DIDN'T.

SATOKO'S GIANT HOME RUN DESERVES MUCH MORE PRAISE.

YOU REALLY DID A FINE JOB IN THE GAME YESTERDAY, MAEBARA-SAN.

MIIIIIIIN (HUMMMMMM)

MIN

MIN

MIN

I'M SURE SATOKO-CHAN WAS BLESSED WITH THE OPPOSITE KIND OF TALENTS.

I NEVER THOUGHT SHE WOULD HAVE HIT A HOME RUN LIKE THAT.

...HE MEANS SATOSHI?

HER BROTHER..

YOU DON'T KNOW? SATOKO-CHAN'S BROTHER. HIS NAME IS SATOSHI-KUN.

HE WAS ON THE HINAMIZAWA FIGHTERS TOO...BUT HE TRANSFERRED SCHOOLS ...

"TRANSFERRED," HUH...?

...ONLY HER BROTHER TRANSFERRED ...?

THAT'S... UNUSUAL...

MIIIIN MIN MIN MIN

.....

A LOT OF... UNFORTUNATE THINGS... HAPPENED.

IT'S BEEN THREE YEARS.

IT WAS RIGHT AROUND THIS TIME OF YEAR.

SATOKO-CHAN'S PARENTS DIED IN AN ACCIDENT.

...AN ACCIDENT ?

YES, THEY FELL FROM A VIEWING PLATFORM IN A PARK WHILE TRAVELLING ...

THE METAL FIXINGS ON THE RAIL HAD DETERIO-RATED...AND SOMETHING MAY HAVE BEEN LOOSE FROM THE HEAVY RAINS THE DAY BEFORE.

WAIT...THE YEAR AFTER THAT, THE PRIEST FROM THE SHRINE AND HIS WIFE DIED.

WERE THEY... RIKA-CHAN'S PARENTS ...!?

...YES... SHE'S LIVING WITH FURUDE-SAN NOW.

THEY BOTH MUST HAVE HAD [redacted] DAYS WHERE THEY FELT HELPLESS AND DISCOURAGED BUT THEY'RE HELPING EACH OTHER TO GET BY.

THAT NURSE WAS SAYING ...!

!

YOU MEAN...THE ACCIDENT FROM THE CURSE RUMORS ...?

THEN SATOKO...

I THINK THAT IT MUST BE VERY HARD...TO LIVE WITHOUT YOUR PARENTS' PROTECTION AT THAT AGE.

EVEN YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THAT, CAN'T YOU, MAEBARA-SAN?

GYU (CLENCH)

.....GH.

FURUDE-SAN IS ALSO THE ONLY DAUGHTER FROM THE VILLAGE'S SHRINE, SO SHE IS WELL-LOVED, ESPECIALLY BY THE OLDER VILLAGERS.

AS LONG AS SHE'S IN THIS VILLAGE, SHE WON'T HAVE TOO MANY TROUBLES.

HOW LONELY...?

BUT THAT'S A SPECIAL CASE THAT ONLY APPLIES TO FURUDE-SAN.

IT'S NOT THE SAME FOR SATOKO-CHAN.

HOW HARD MUST THAT BE?

HOW COULD I EVEN IMAGINE IT?

SHE SMILES AND LOOKS LIKE SHE'S HAVING SO MUCH FUN.

THERE ARE TIMES...

...WHEN I'VE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED ADOPTING HER.

THAT SHE'S NOT HURTING?

OBVIOUSLY A DINNER TABLE SURROUNDED BY YOUR FAMILY IS THE MOST FUN YOU COULD HAVE!!

IS SHE SAYING SHE'S NOT LONELY?

YOUR FAMILY CAN EAT AROUND THE TABLE WITH NO OUTSIDERS!

I'VE REALLY LIVED A STEADY LIFE UP TO MY AGE. I HAVE MONEY AND CREDIBILITY. ...BUT THE ONE THING I'M NOT IS MARRIED.

...BY LAW, ONLY MARRIED PEOPLE ARE ALLOWED TO ADOPT ...

SO I... CAN'T DO SATOKO-CHAN THE FAVOR OF ADOPTING HER...

EH...? ADOPT...?

AH-HA-HA. IT'S TOO BAD. MY PLAN TO HAVE SATOKO-CHAN CALL ME "DADDY" CAME TO A HALT EARLY IN ITS DEVELOP-MENT...

THIS PERSON...

I THOUGHT HE WAS JUST A GOOFBALL ...

SATOKO-CHAN'S LIFE RIGHT NOW CAN'T BE A VERY HAPPY ONE...BUT, YOU KNOW ...

I WISH I COULD GIVE HER EVEN A LITTLE RELIEF.

...SATOKO... IS HAPPY.

EH?

...SHE HAS SOMEONE CLOSE BY WISHING SO STRONGLY FOR HER HAPPINESS. THERE'S NO WAY SHE COULD BE UNHAPPY.

...THANK YOU.

AH-HA-HA-HA...

WHAT A COIN-CIDENCE. I WAS THINKING THE SAME THING.

...I WANT THAT GIRL TO ALWAYS BE SMILING.

TO NEVER... EVER MAKE HER CRY.

OH, YOU TOO, MAEBA-RA-SAN? THEN WE ARE COM-RADES.

LET'S MAKE A PROMISE.

A PROMISE ?

WE'LL NEVER MAKE HER CRY.

...WE'LL WATCH OVER HER... WITHOUT FAIL.

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS...

YEAH.

WH-WHAT ARE YOU SAYING!? I HEARD YOU CLEARLY JUST NOW!

UM... MAEBARA-SAN? I HAVEN'T SAID ANYTHING YET.

YES, YES! YOU CLEARLY SAID YOU WOULD CONFINE SATOKO, CHAIN HER TO THE RACK, AND MAKE HER YOUR MEAT SLAVE.

FIRST OF ALL, I WOULD MAKE HER CALL ME "MASTER," AND RE-EDUCATE HER TO BE A MAID AND SERVE ME.

WHAAA?

FOR THE SAKE OF ARGU-MENT

WHAT WOULD YOU DO... IF YOU *COULD* ADOPT SATO-KO?

HMMM ...

NIKO (BEAM)

MION.

...OR NOT.

SHION-SAN!

I'M GLAD YOU CAME.

YES, WELL ...

OH, MAEBARA-SAN, SHE LIVES IN OKINOMIYA. THIS IS...

NO, I KNOW HER. MION'S TWIN SISTER, SHION.

I DIDN'T HAVE ANY-THING ELSE TO DO, SO I THOUGHT I'D COME TEASE YOU FOR A BIT.

OH, YOU KNOW HER?

YES.

BY THE WAY, COACH. WHY DID YOU INVITE SHION TO THE VICTORY PARTY?

AH-HA-HA-HA! ACTUALLY, IT'S BECAUSE I'M THE HINAMIZAWA FIGHTERS' MANAGER.

MION

SHION

ONCE I SAW HER IN OKI-NOMIYA... AND THOUGHT SHE WAS MION... AND STUFF HAPPENED.

WELL, SHE'S A WONDERFUL LITTLE SISTER WITHOUT AN IOTA OF MODESTY.

I GUESS YOU COULD REFER TO THE COTTON DRIFTING ARC

AH-HA-HA-HA. YOU SAID IT, KEI-CHAN!

LABEL: TWINS OF THE SONOZAKI FAMILY NAME: SHION

HMM.

I WON'T ASK YOU TO COME TO PRACTICE, BUT PLEASE AT LEAST COME SUPPORT US AT THE GAMES LIKE YOU USED TO.

IF YOU DON'T COME, SHION-CHAN, WE DON'T HAVE ANY BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS AT OUR GAME.

WELL, I AM THE MANAGER, BUT I'M A GHOST MANAGER.

MAN-AGER!!? YOU'RE KIDDING! THEN WHY WEREN'T YOU AT THE GAME YESTER-DAY?

SH-SH-SH-SH-SH-SH-

SHION!!?

EH...?

IT'S NOT WORTH SUPPORTING A GAME IF THERE AREN'T ANY GOOD-LOOKING BOYS THERE.

IF KEI-CHAN JOINS THE HINAMIZAWA FIGHTERS, THEN MAYBE I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.

AAAAHH! MII-CHAN'S SISTER! HELLO!

RENA-SAN! HELLO!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY HI!!!

WHERE DID YOU MATE-RIALIZE FROM !!!?

GABAAA (GRRRAAAB)

HMM, THAT'S TOO BAD. THEN WE'LL NEGOTIATE AT ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY.

YUP. KEIICHI-KUN IS OUR CLUB'S MOST PROMISING NEW MEMBER. SO WE CAN'T TRADE HIM.

NO SOLICITING KEI-CHAN!! KEI-CHAN IS THE HOPE OF OUR CLUB!!!

GARURURURURU (GRRRRRRRR)

HEY!! COME ON, KEI-CHAN! WE'RE ALL GONNA PLAY A GAME!!

WHY DON'T YOU JOIN US, SHII-CHAN? THE RULES ARE SIMPLE, AND IT'S REALLY FUN!

COACH, WHY DID YOU INVITE SHION!? SHION'S A GHOST MEMBER, AND SHE'S BEEN DITCHING FOR A WHOLE YEAR!!!

I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE NICE IF SHION CAME AND LIVENED THINGS UP... YES, THINGS HAVE LIVENED UP.

KACHIN (SNAP)

AND I'D FEEL BAD IF I RUINED ONEE'S REPUTATION AS CLUB PRESIDENT.

HMM, WHAT TO DO? IF I PLAYED, I WOULD JUST WIN.

GOOD LUCK!! I'LL BE CHEERING YOU ON FROM HERE!!

...MION AVOIDED A DIRECT CONFRONTATION! THESE TWO **REALLY** DON'T GET ALONG...

NYA-NYA!! I WON'T LET YOU PLAY, SHION!! YOU'RE NOT OUR FRIEND!!

WHAT IS IT, ONEE? SHOULD WE MAKE IT A ***SISTER SHOW-DOWN?***

NNNNGH

COME ON, COME ON, KEIICHI-SAN! SAY YOUR PRAYERS!

WE'RE GOING ALL OUT TODAY!!

YEAH!! THAT'S JUST FINE WITH ME!! WHETHER IT'S SATOKO OR ANY-BODY ELSE, THERE'S NO NEED TO HOLD BACK— I'LL CRUSH YOU!!

ALL RIGHT! TODAY'S GAME IS...

AH HA HA HA...

JAAAA (SPLAAAASH)

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

KANA

KANA

HERE. A SPONGE AND SOAP.

BUTSU

BUTSU (MUTTER)

IT WAS GOING FINE UNTIL THEY ALL HIT ME WITH SCISSORS... I NEVER THOUGHT SATOKO AND RIKA-CHAN WOULD BETRAY ME LIKE THAT...

BUTSU

LOSER CLEANS UP AND WASHES THE BARBECUE PLATE (LARGE)

DAMMIT!

JAAAAA-

YOU COULD JUST LET THE ADULTS TAKE CARE OF THAT. YOU'RE A NICE GUY THROUGH AND THROUGH, KEI-CHAN.

OH, SHION. THANKS.

YOU CAN'T CLEAN THAT WITH JUST WATER.

...I KIND OF GET THE FEELING THAT THAT'S NOT REALLY A COMPLIMENT ..

I'M SURPRISED.

...TO THINK YOU WERE THE TEAM MANAGER, SHION...

...BUT...

WELL... SOMEDAY.

BUT COACH SAID HE WANTS YOU BACK.

YOU SHOULD COME BACK SOMETIMES.

YES, I GUESS YOU WOULD BE. BUT ...

...NOW I'M A COMPLETE GHOST.

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

A LOT DIFFERENT THAN SATOSHI-KUN.

...I HAVE NO DOUBT ALL OF HIS REFLEXES WERE SNATCHED UP BY HIS LITTLE SISTER.

OH YEAH, I HEARD ABOUT YESTER-DAY'S GAME.

SO YOU PLAYED A BIG PART IN IT, HUH?

HA-HA.

IF YOU'RE GONNA PRAISE SOMEONE, IT SHOULD BE SA-TOKO AND HER WINNING HOME RUN...SHE'S GOT GOOD REFLEXES.

...I HAVEN'T MET HIM... BUT I KNOW A LITTLE ABOUT HIM.

...I THINK... AFTER THEY LOST THEIR PARENTS...

SO SHE KNEW SATOSHI TOO...?

... SATOSHI-KUN?

SATOKO HOJO'S OLDER BROTHER, SATOSHI HOJO-KUN.

OH YEAH, YOU JUST MOVED IN THIS YEAR. ...SO YOU WOULDN'T HAVE MET HIM.

KANA KANA KANA KANA

...WHO...?

...HE... TRANS-FERRED SCHOOLS, RIGHT?

WHO TOLD YOU SOME-THING LIKE THAT ...?

...EH?

"TRANSFERRED SCHOOLS?"

WHO TOLD YOU...

...EH...?

...SOME-THING LIKE THAT?

CHAPTER 5

SHION...?

W-WHO ...?

WHO WAS IT...? UH, YEAH, I HEARD IT FROM SOME-BODY.

WHO WAS THAT SOMEBODY? WHO WAS IT? YOU SAID THAT BECAUSE YOU HEARD IT FROM SOMEBODY, RIGHT? THAT SATOSHI-KUN TRANSFERRED SCHOOLS.

I DON'T... REALLY REMEMBER WHO I HEARD IT FROM.

IS THERE SOME KIND OF PROBLEM?

THERE IS. WAS THERE A NOTICE OF TRANSFER? DID ANYONE AT SCHOOL SEE IT?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH HER?

DID YOU HEAR IT FROM SOME-ONE?

SHION!

SUL (INHALE)

...I'M SORRY.

BUT KEI-CHAN, IF YOU DON'T REALLY KNOW, THEN PLEASE DON'T SAY THINGS LIKE SATOSHI-KUN TRANSFERRED SCHOOLS. REALLY, PLEASE?

...I'M SORRY...

ZAAAH (WHOOOOSH)

AND SHION OVERREACTED...

...TO THE WORDS "TRANSFERRED SCHOOLS."

NO... I'M SORRY ...

"SATO-SHI'S PARENTS DIED BEFORE HE DID, AND HE RAN AWAY FROM HOME, LEAVING HIS SISTER SA-TOKO."

I'M NOT REALLY ACCUSING YOU, KEI-CHAN.

I WAS A LITTLE HARSH, WASN'T I? I'M SORRY.

ZA (STEP)

.....

SFX: ZAAAAAA (RUUUUUUUN)

KYU (SQUEAK)

KYU

WELL, WORK HARD. IT LOOKS LIKE THAT PLATE YOU HAVE IS THE LAST THING THAT NEEDS TO BE WASHED.

HEY, SHION...

WHY ...?

GUI (WIPE)

ZABU (SCRUB)

ZABU

ZABU

WHAT'S GOING ON...?

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

KANA

KANA

THANKS FOR COMING TODAY!

TODAY'S GAME. THIRD PLACE

AAHH, IN THE VERY END, MION-SAN GOT ME! I'M MORTIFIED !!!

...MOR-TIFIED, SIR.

FOURTH PLACE

...IT'S PRETTY HARD TO LIE TO RENA. SHE HAS GOOD INSTINCTS, SIR.

AH-HA-HA-HA-HA. RENA NEVER FELL FOR ANY OF IT! THAT'S HOW I GOT SECOND PLACE.

SECOND PLACE

THIS IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF HOW TRAITORS WILL BE BETRAYED IN THE END!

RRAAAAH! I DON'T WANT TO HEAR THAT FROM YOU, KEIICHI-SAN!!

HUH, THAT'S SURPRISING. SHE SEEMS LIKE THE EASIEST TO FOOL.

...REALLY ARE...

YEAH, YEAH!

I'LL TRY.

...TIMES LIKE THESE..

...WHEN I'M THE HAPPIEST.

SEE YOU TOMORROW!

YOU'RE THE EASIEST TO FOOL, KEI-CHAN!! YOU TRY TO PREY ON OTHERS AND IMMEDI-ATELY FALL PREY YOUR-SELF!!

DON'T FALL FOR ANY OF THOSE SCAMS THAT SAY YOU'LL MAKE MORE MONEY THE MORE FRIENDS YOU INTRODUCE TO THEM!

TODAY'S FIRST PLACE

COME TO THINK OF IT, IT'S STILL JUNE. WE HAD NO RAINY SEASON THIS YEAR, SO IT FEELS LIKE IT'S SUDDENLY SUMMER.

...BUT...

SFX: KANA (CHIRP) KANA KANA KANA KANA KANA

IT'S SUPPOSED TO RAIN SOMETIME NEXT WEEK! IT WOULD BE A PROBLEM IF IT CAME ON THE DAY OF THE COTTON DRIFTING FESTIVAL, BUT...RENA LIKES THE RAINY SEASON, SO I CAN'T WAIT!

...WHAT KEEPS TUGGING AT MY MIND...

EH...?

EHH? BUT THE RAINY SEASON JUST MAKES YOU ALL DEPRESSED!

RIGHT, KEI-CHAN!!

UH... YEAH.

WHO TOLD YOU...

...SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

HEY... SATOKO HAD A BROTHER, RIGHT...? NAMED SATOSHI?

...WANT...

...WHAT HAPPENED TO SATOSHI AGAIN...?

DID HE MOVE...?

MAYBE I REALLY SHOULD HAVE AVOIDED THIS TOPIC ...?

BUT... I...

HE "TRANS-FERRED SCHOOLS."

HUH...? DIDN'T WE TELL YOU?

.....

...UM, WELL... HMM...

...TO KNOW EVERYTHING.

IF HE REALLY TRANSFERRED, HE SHOULD HAVE TURNED IN A TRANSFER NOTICE, RIGHT?

BUT NOTHING LIKE THAT EVER SHOWED UP, DID IT?

TRANSFERRED SCHOOLS

TRANS-FERRED... WHO TOLD YOU THAT?

EH...?

NO, WHAT AM I DOING ...?

HA (GASP)

.....

IT'S OKAY, WE DON'T NEED TO TALK ABOUT IT...

NO...I'M NOT REALLY ACCUSING YOU OR ANYTHING. IT'S JUST, I MEAN...IT JUST BOTHERED ME A LITTLE...

THEY'RE ONLY HIDING THE FACT THAT SATOSHI RAN AWAY OUT OF CONSIDER-ATION FOR SATOKO, RIGHT...?

"HE WON'T COME BACK" ...?

EH...?

HE WON'T COME BACK.

I DON'T KNOW.

SOMETHING FEELS OFF...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN... "HE WON'T COME BACK"?

THEN WHERE DID SATOSHI GO?

WHEN SHE PUTS IT THAT WAY, IT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE HE RAN AWAY, BUT LIKE...

THE POLICE INVESTIGATED, AND UM...IT LOOKED LIKE SATOSHI HAD BEEN SAVING UP FROM WORK AND STUFF...

...AND THEY FOUND OUT THAT IT HAD ALL BEEN WITHDRAWN ON THE DAY HE DISAPPEARED. ...AND I GUESS SOMEONE SAW SOMEONE WHO LOOKED A LOT LIKE SATOSHI AT NAGOYA STATION...

"THEY STARTED THINKING MAYBE HE'D RUN AWAY FROM HOME."

WELL, I MEAN...ALL THE VILLAGERS AND THE POLICE LOOKED EVERYWHERE, BUT... THAT IS...THEY STARTED THINKING MAYBE HE'D RUN AWAY FROM HOME ...

...SO... THAT'S HOW IT IS...ONE DAY... SATOSHI JUST DIDN'T COME HOME ...

...AND USED IT TO RUN AWAY...

WITHDREW ALL HIS SAVINGS...

!?

WAIT A SECOND... IF HE DIDN'T TRANSFER AND HE DIDN'T MOVE...AND HE DIDN'T RUN AWAY...WHAT THE HELL DID SATOSHI—

BECAUSE IT'S...

STOP IT, RENA.

I DON'T THINK THAT'S TRUE. SATOSHI-KUN DIDN'T RUN AWAY.

...OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE.

SATOSHI-KUN TOLD ME BEFORE HE DISAP-PEARED.

...SOME-ONE WAS WATCHING HIM, FOLLOWING HIM. THEY EVEN FOLLOWED HIM HOME.

ZOKU (CHILL)

...EH...? WHA...?

HE TOLD ME THAT WHEN HE WAS SLEEPING, THEY STOOD BY HIS PILLOW AND LOOKED DOWN ON HIM.

...STOP IT, RENA.

OYASHIRO-SAMA IS THE GOD THAT PROTECTS HINAMIZAWA... OYASHIRO-SAMA WILL NEVER FORGIVE ANYONE WHO WOULD TRY TO ABANDON HINAMIZAWA AND RUN AWAY.

I APOLOGIZED FOR IT.

BUT I'M SURE SATOSHI-KUN DIDN'T APOLOGIZE. THAT'S WHY!! I HAVE NO DOUBT HE MET WITH OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE!!

...I SAID STOP IT...

THAT IS WITHOUT A DOUBT A SIGN OF OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE.

I'M SURE THAT SOMEWHERE IN HIS HEART, SATOSHI-KUN HAD ABANDONED HINAMIZAWA AND WANTED TO RUN AWAY.

AND OYASHIRO-SAMA WOULDN'T ALLOW IT.

THE POLICE MAY HAVE DECIDED THAT HE RAN AWAY FROM HOME, BUT I DON'T BELIEVE IT, I DON'T BELIEVE IT, I'LL NEVER BELIEVE IT!

OYASHIRO-SAMA'S... CURSE... YOU SAY ...?

THAT'S JUST A LIE TOLD BY THE IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN THE VILLAGE WHO DON'T WANT TO ACKNOWL-EDGE THE CURSE !!

WHETHER YOU BELIEVE IT OR NOT, OYASHI-RO-SAMA'S CURSE DOES

KANA MIRE

KANA

KANA

KANA

KANA

PAAAAAN
(SLAAAAP)

I TOLD YOU TO CUT IT OUT!!

AH, OKAY. THEN RENA WILL GO ON HOME.

DID SHE PROMISE THAT...?

...UM, KEI-CHAN.

I PROMISED I'D LOAN YOU SOME MANGA, DIDN'T I? WANNA STOP BY MY PLACE?

Y-YEAH.

.....

LATER, RENA. SEE YOU TOMOR-ROW.

YEAH. SEE YOU TOMOR-ROW.

.....

.....

DON'T...

...LET THAT BOTHER YOU TOO MUCH...

...

...I'LL NEVER... ASK AGAIN...

SO WILL YOU TELL ME THE TRUTH...?

IT'S NOT LIKE... WE WERE H'DING ANYTHING ABOUT SATOSHI FROM YOU.

THAT IS . IT'S SOME-THING THAT SHOULDN'T BE BROUGHT UP SO MUCH.

KANA

NO . IT DOESN'T

I THINK IT WAS MY FAULT .

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

KANA

KANA

I TOLD YOU ONCE IN FRONT OF THE MONUMENT...THAT THERE WERE TALKS OF BUILDING A DAM IN THIS VILLAGE, AND EVERYONE IN THE VILLAGE FOUGHT AGAINST IT, RIGHT?

YEAH. A MONUMENT TO OUR VICTORY WHEN THEY WITHDREW THE DAM PROJECT.

ACTUALLY, THERE WERE VERY FEW OF THEM, BUT SOME PEOPLE APPROVED OF THE DAM IDEA.

WE ALL BANDED TOGETHER AS ONE TO PROTECT

...ONLY A LITTLE...

...HAVE YOU HEARD OF OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE?

...IF YOU SAID IT OUT LOUD, YOU WOULD BE OSTRACIZED.

...AND IT WOULDN'T BE WEIRD FOR THERE TO BE PEOPLE HERE WHO WANT A NEW WAY OF LIFE.

IT'S TRUE THAT THIS VILLAGE ISN'T FUNDAMENTALLY WEALTHY.

DID SATOSHI'S PARENTS... KNOW THAT...

BUT EVEN IF YOU THOUGHT THAT...

AND THE LEADERS OF THE PRO-DAM FACTION WERE SATOSHI'S PARENTS.

...THE GOVERNMENT HAD PREPARED A LOT OF COMPENSATION ALONG WITH THE DAM CONSTRUCTION PROJECT... THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO APPROVED OF THE PROJECT BECAUSE THEY WANTED THE MONEY.

POSTERS: STOP THE PROJECT! DAM RESIS / HINA DAM / PROTECT HINAMIZAWA / ANTI-DAM

...SO PEOPLE STARTED WONDERING IF THEY HAD MET WITH OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE...

THEN... HIS PARENTS HAD THE BAD LUCK...TO DIE IN AN ACCIDENT ON THE DAY OF THE FESTIVAL HONORING OYASHIRO-SAMA...

...WHEN THEY BECAME THE LEADERS OF THAT GROUP...?

KOKUN (NOD)

...I DON'T THINK I NEED TO EXPLAIN ANY MORE. ...TO SATOKO, HER PARENTS' ACCIDENT, SATOSHI'S RUNNING AWAY...

...AND OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE...

...AREN'T PLEASANT THINGS TO TALK ABOUT. YOU UNDERSTAND THAT, RIGHT?

...AND THEY EVEN TURNED SATOSHI'S RUNNING AWAY NTO OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE...?

...YEAH... WELL... SOMETHING LIKE THAT...

...YEAH, I UNDERSTAND. I REGRET BEING RECKLESS ENOUGH TO ASK.

OH, KEI-CHAN. ONE MORE THING.

LATER, MION. SORRY ABOUT TODAY.

...SEE YOU TOMORROW.

YEAH. LATER.

...NOT JUST SATOKO... WOULD YOU PLEASE NOT TALK ABOUT SATOSHI IN FRONT OF RENA EITHER ...?

I THINK YOU FIGURED IT OUT AFTER WHAT JUST HAPPENED ...

...BUT FOR SOME REASON, WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT OYASHIRO-SAMA WITH RENA, IT'S NO LAUGHING MATTER...EVER SINCE SHE TRANSFERRED HERE.

.....

OH... THIS IS A SECRET, GOT IT? YOU TELL ANYONE, AND I'LL NEVER SPEAK TO YOU AGAIN.

...I DON'T KNOW... BUT... RENA ...

SHION TOO...

IT'S NOT ONLY RENA...

...I WONDER WHY RENA'S SO SERIOUS ABOUT IT...

SHE SAYS SHE'S MET...WITH OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE.

...EH?

RENA IS USUALLY SO LIGHT-HEARTED... BUT WHEN SHE GETS MAD...SHE'S REALLY SCARY.

BUT SHE REALLY BELIEVES IT. IF YOU POKE FUN AT HER FOR IT, SHE GETS REALLY MAD.

...I FEEL BAD, BUT I THINK IT'S SOME OVERREACTION FROM A PERSECUTION COMPLEX OR SOME-THING.

"FOR RENA'S SAKE... AND FOR SATOKO'S SAKE..."

"...YEAH. IF POSSIBLE, I THINK IT WOULD BE BEST NEVER TO TALK ABOUT THIS AGAIN.

"I UNDERSTAND. YOU'RE TELLING ME NOT TO TALK ABOUT SATOSHI IN FRONT OF RENA, RIGHT?"

THE FUN WE HAD SEEMS LIKE IT WAS ALL A LIE...

HOW CAN I TREAD ON THE DARK PARTS OF HER LIFE JUST OUT OF CURIOSITY...? ...THE BASEBALL GAME...THE BARBECUE PARTY...

HERE I AM, WANTING SATOKO TO SMILE.

I'M AN IDIOT.

THE FUN DAYS ARE ALREADY COMING TO AN END.

BUT IT'S TOO LATE.

I'LL BE CAREFUL FROM TOMORROW ON.

SO NOTHING UNPLEASANT LIKE THIS HAPPENS AGAIN...

GYU (CLENCH)

I WANT IT TO LET ME KNOW HOW ABSURD MY MINOR UNEASINESS IS...!

I WANT IT TO HURRY UP AND BE TOMORROW ...

HEY, HEY, CALM DOWN! KEIICHI MAEBARA!!

PAN (WHAP)

...IS LONG...

THE NIGHT...

PICHICHI (CHEE-CHEE-CHEED)

AND THEY...

BAD DREAMS AND OMINOUS DREAMS ALTERNATING ALL NIGHT.

I HAD THE WORST DREAMS.

...SEEMED TO HINT AT SOME KIND OF ANXIETY.

KEIICHI-KUN!!

GOOD MORNING!

PASHAN (SPLASH)

NO...

THERE'S NO WAY... A LITTLE SLIP OF THE TONGUE LIKE THAT WOULDN'T END EVERY-THING...

THERE'S NO WAY.

I'M OFF.

MORNING, RENA!

SHE'S THE SAME AS ALWAYS...

RENA...

RIGHT... SERI-OUSLY...

LET'S GO TO SCHOOL.

GOOD MORNING, KEI-CHAN! RENA!

YEAH!!

I WANT TO HURRY AND SEE SATOKO'S CHEERFUL SMILE.

...THIS IS THE ONE TIME THEY'RE LATE? WHAT'S WITH THOSE TWO...?

PATA (PATTER)

PATA

PATA

OH? ARE FURUDE-SAN AND HOJO-SAN LATE TODAY?

...SAN.

FURUDE-SAN.

...SAN.

.....

YOU'RE LATE, FURUDE-SAN. ...WHERE'S HOJO-SAN?

GARA (RATTLE)

...SATOKO...

...MIGHT BE A LITTLE LATE, SIR...

RIKA-CHAN...

.....

YO, RIKA-CHAN! POOR, POOR THING, COMING LATE TO SCHOOL. I'LL PAT *YOUR* HEAD TODAY.

...WHY ISN'T SATOKO HERE? ...SHE SICK?

RIKA-CHAN ...?

COME ON, COME ON, KEI-CHAN! THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU JUST CAN'T TALK TO BOYS ABOUT!!

BACK TO YOUR SEAT, BACK TO YOUR SEAT!

...WHAT ON EARTH...?

SO...

...SHE WOULDN'T SAY SOMETHING AS VAGUE AS, "SHE MIGHT BE LATE TODAY."

THAT BEING THE CASE...

RIKA-CHAN AND SATOKO ARE SUPPOSED TO LIVE TOGETHER.

RENA...

IF YOU CAN TALK TO RENA ABOUT IT...IF I CAN HELP BY LISTENING... I WILL.

WHAT IS GOING ON TODAY...?

DAMN ...

WHAT'S WRONG, KEIICHI-KUN...?

YOU'VE BEEN DOWN ALL DAY...

EVERYTHING WAS FUN. NOTHING WEIRD HAPPENED.

UNTIL YESTER-DAY...

EH...?

.....

FUN AND PEACE-FUL...

EVERY DAY WAS SO ANIMATED ...

I DIDN'T FEEL ANY ANXIETY ABOUT THOSE DAYS REPEATING OVER AND OVER.

...YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT.

EVERY DAY IS FUN. AND I'M SURE TODAY WILL BE FUN TOO.

...CAN YOU BE CONFIDENT THAT IT DEFINITELY WILL BE?

EH...?

...YEAH... I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL A LITTLE.

... LATELY, I'VE BEEN UNEASY ... BECAUSE EVERY DAY HAS BEEN SO FUN, I'VE STARTED TO WONDER IF ONE DAY, IT'LL JUST VANISH...LIKE *THAT*...AND GO ALL BLACK...

...BUT BECAUSE OF THAT, WE LEARNED TO WORK SO THAT THE FUN DAYS WILL GO ON.

SOMETIMES WE'RE AFRAID OF THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FUN.

WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN TAUGHT... THAT GOOD THINGS DON'T LAST.

LET'S SAY SUDDENLY A VOLCANO ERUPTS TOMORROW AND WE ALL DIE.

SO I DON'T THINK IT'S BAD AT ALL FOR YOU TO THINK THAT WAY, KEIICHI-KUN...FOR EXAMPLE ...

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL?

AND YOU, KEIICHI-KUN, WERE THE ONLY ONE TO SURVIVE THAT HUGE DISASTER

"IF THIS WAS HOW THINGS WERE DESTINED TO TURN OUT, I WISH I HAD SPENT ALL MY DAYS BEFORE TODAY HAVING MORE FUN, WITHOUT ANYTHING TO REGRET."

AND I BET YOU'D THINK...

MY HEART WOULD BURST...

"HOW WOULD I...?"

IF THE FUN DAYS ARE GOING TO END SOMEDAY... THEN THE BEST THING WOULD BE TO HAVE AS MUCH FUN AS WE CAN IN LIFE, SO WE WON'T REGRET IT IF THAT DAY COMES! TOMORROW!

...SO I THINK IT'S OKAY TO TREASURE THOSE FEELINGS OF ANXIETY.

BUT YOU'VE REALIZED IT, KEIICHI-KUN... I THINK THAT'S WONDERFUL.

IT'S VERY DIFFICULT TO REALIZE THAT.

IT'S SO... EXAGGERATED ...

...IS THAT WHAT YOU DO?

...RENA?

...SO WHEN THE END REALLY DOES COME... WE WON'T REGRET IT.

... EVERYONE MIGHT DIE IN A HUGE DISASTER TOMOR-ROW.

...SO TODAY, LET'S BE REALLY NICE TO EVERY-ONE.

YUP.

...BECAUSE RENA KNOWS THAT THE FUN DAYS COULD ALL END IN JUST ONE DAY...

I'M LIVING WITH ALL MY MIGHT.

...YESTERDAY ...

I THINK I DREAMED ABOUT SATOKO... I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT THE DREAM WAS ABOUT... BUT I'M SO SCARED...

...THEN BE NICE TO SATOKO-CHAN WHEN SHE GETS HERE, OKAY?

NO, I WOULDN'T MIND IF YOU PLAY YOUR PRANKS WITH HER LIKE ALWAYS!

KOKUN (NOD)

コクン

...SO DID YOU THINK...YOU WOULD FEEL BETTER...IF YOU COULD SEE SATOKO-CHAN'S CHEERFUL FACE?

...YOU'RE RIGHT...

RIRIIIN (RRRRING)

RIRIIIN

.....

...SHOULD SATOKO... HAVE GOTTEN HERE BY LUNCH-TIME...?

I'VE NEVER SEEN RIKA-CHAN...

...SO DOWN...

NO ONE'S TAKING ANY FOOD, SO RENA'S TAKING IT ALL.

TEE HEE HEE! YUM!

!

HEY! THIS OLD MAN WAS CARELESS!! LETTING RENA GET THE FIRST BITE!

!!

HYOI (YOINK)

THAT'S RIGHT...!

THIS IS NO JOKE! I'M NOT GONNA LET MY LAST LUNCH BE JUST RICE AND DRIED PLUMS!!

AS MUCH FUN AS WE CAN!

...MEW! MY SIDE DISHES ARE DIS-APPEAR-ING!

THANKS, EVERY-ONE.

I'M SURE THIS...IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

SATOKO. I'M READY ANY TIME!

I'LL GREET YOU...

HELLO, GOOD AFTERNOON.

...IT'S ONLY JUNE, BUT IT FEELS LIKE MIDSUMMER...

HOT

PATA (PATTER) PATA

MIN

MIN

MIN

JAAAA (FLUUUSH)

WITH MY BEST SMILE ...!

MIIIIN (CHUMMM)

MIN

MIN

MIN

MIN

AH HA HA HA

EHH?

YOU'RE THE WORST!

CRAP! SORRY BATH-ROOM!

...I DON'T KNOW THIS PERSON...

...YEAH.

NII! (GRIIND)

SORRY TO BOTHER YOU DURING LUNCH-TIME...

...IS THIS GUY?

WHO?

ZOUO (CHILLIN')

GOKUN GULP

CALM DOWN, KEIICHI MAE-BARA.

IF I WANT MY DAYS TO KEEP GOING LIKE THEY DID UNTIL YES-TERDAY, THERE'S NO NEED FOR A MAN TO SHOW UP WHO WASN'T HERE BEFORE TODAY.

OH, PARDON ME. I'M NO ONE SUSPICIOUS. NN-HN-HN.

I'M OOISHI, FROM THE OKINOMIYA POLICE...HUH? WHERE DID MY BADGE GO?

HE'S SOME-ONE WHO SHOULD NOT BE HERE.

WHAT IS THIS CHILLS?

LIKE THERE'S A FLASHY, COLORFUL, POISONOUS BUG CRAWLING ON MY FORE-HEAD.

A COM-PLETELY ILLOGICAL, BUT PURE ...

...REVUL-SION.

MY FRIEND... WHO?

OH, NO, NO! I AM LOOKING FOR THE FACULTY ROOM, BUT RIGHT NOW, I'D LIKE YOU TO CALL YOUR FRIEND... WOULD YOU BE SO KIND?

...ARE YOU LOOKING FOR THE FACULTY ROOM? THEN TAKE THAT HALL...

DON'T JUST DECIDE THAT THE FUN DAYS ARE GONNA END JUST BECAUSE THIS GUY SHOWED UP...

WOULD YOU GET SATOKO HOJO-SAN FOR ME?

HIGURASHI WHEN THEY CRY [illegible] ❶ END

ABOUT THE MANGA VERSION OF "CURSE KILLING ARC"

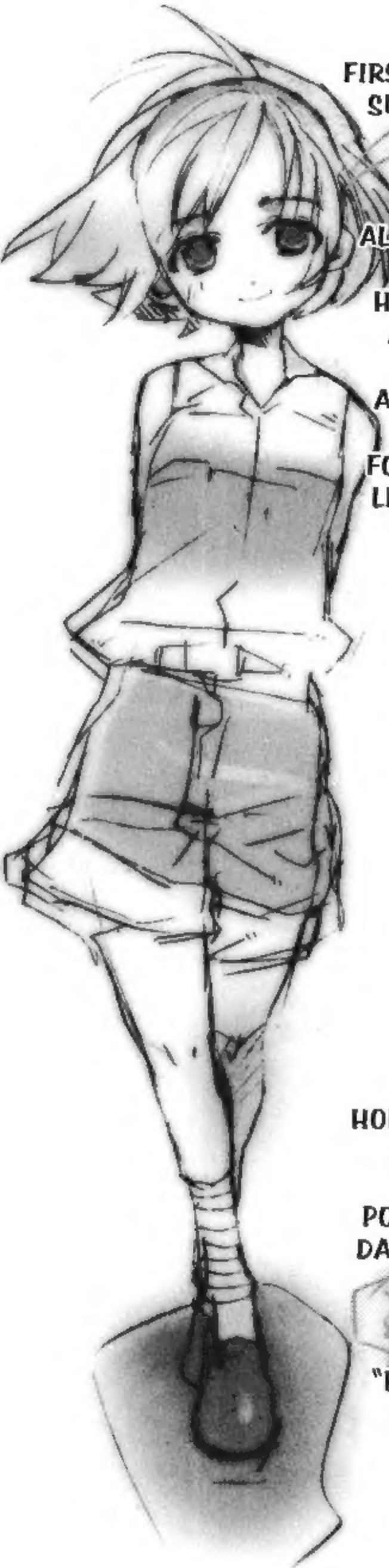
ORIGINAL STORY, SUPERVISOR: RYUKISHI07

HELLO, I'M RYUKISHI07; I WROTE THE ORIGINAL STORY. I TRULY THANK YOU FOR PICKING UP "HIGURASHI WHEN THEY CRY: CURSE KILLING ARC" VOLUME ONE.

THE "CURSE KILLING ARC" FOCUSES MAINLY ON SATOKO, THE JUNIOR CLASSMAN WHO'S LIKE AN UPSTART LITTLE SISTER. IT REALLY IS HEARTWARMING TO SEE SATOKO DRAWN SO CHEERFULLY AND CHARMINGLY BY SUZUKI-SENSEI. BUT IT'S "HIGURASHI." IT WON'T END WITH JUST THE HEARTWARMINGNESS....

THE "CURSE KILLING ARC" IS THE THIRD ARC OF THE EIGHT ORIGINAL ARCS AND HAS BEEN CALLED THE MOST PITIABLE AND VIVID OF THE SCENARIOS. THAT MIGHT BE BECAUSE THE THEME IT DEALS WITH IS A PROBLEM THAT IS CLOSE TO ALL OF US. I WOULD LOVE IT IF YOU WOULD READ THE COMIC THROUGH THE EYES OF THE MAIN CHARACTER, KEIICHI MAEBARA, THINKING ABOUT WHAT YOU WOULD DO IF YOU WERE KEIICHI.

NOW, SPEAKING OF SUZUKI-SENSEI, SHE'S A SHARK! THE ROUGH DRAFTS BY THIS SENSEI, WHO HAS A PERFECT LOVE FOR HAMMERHEAD SHARKS, ALWAYS HAVE A SHARK IN THE CORNER, NO MATTER HOW VIVID AND SHOCKING THE SCENE MAY BE. IT'S SOOTHING (LAUGH).



TO THOSE WHO ARE MEETING ME FOR THE FIRST TIME AND THOSE WHO AREN'T, HELLO, I'M JIRO SUZUKI. I SINCERELY THANK YOU FOR TAKING THIS OCCASION TO BUY "HIGURASHI WHEN THEY CRY: CURSE KILLING ARC." ...MAN, I REALLY AM GLAD THAT IT CAME OUT SAFELY. IT'S ALREADY BEEN ALMOST A YEAR SINCE I WAS GIVEN THE HIGURASHI MANGA PROJECT. TIME FLIES. REGARDLESS OF HAVING EASILY IMAGINED WHAT KIND OF HELLISH, ANGRY WAVES OF SCHEDULE, WHICH I HAD NEVER BEFORE EXPERIENCED, WOULD AWAIT ME IF I ACCEPTED, SINCE I HAD AN ORIGINAL SERIES I WAS WORKING ON, I AGREED RIGHT AWAY WITH SUCH FORCE THAT I MIGHT AS WELL HAVE SAID, "I WON'T LET ANY OTHER ARTIST TAKE IT FROM ME!" I STILL REMEMBER THAT DAY CLEARLY. I MEAN, I COULD NEVER FORGET IT. AND AT THE SAME TIME, I DON'T REGRET IT.

I MEAN, HEY, YOU. IT'S THE CURSE KILLING. IT'S SATOKO. IT'S NII-NII. IT'S THAT SCENE, AND THAT SCENE. IS IT REALLY OKAY FOR ME TO DRAW IT? IT IS, RIGHT? IS IT OKAY FOR ME TO BE NII-NII? IT IS, RIGHT!? I WILL DRAW IT! I'LL DRAW IT WITH A GOOFY GRIN!

WHILE MIXING WITH SUCH SUBTLE MISUNDERSTANDINGS, I AM WRITING TODAY WITH MY USUAL ENERGY.

AND AS I WORK ON THE SECOND HALF, VOLUME TWO, OF THE THIRD AND LONGEST ARC OF THE ORIGINAL STORY, TO BE HONEST, EVERY DAY I'M HOLDING MY HEAD IN MY HANDS, THINKING, "THERE AREN'T ENOUGH PAGES!" BUT I INTEND TO GO ON DRAWING WITH MAXIMUM EFFORT AND NII-NII POWER, SO THAT THE ROUGH DRAFTS CONSTANTLY DANCE ON MY TONGUE, WITHOUT LEAVING OUT ANY OF THE MANY DELICIOUS SCENES THAT REMAIN. I HOPE YOU WILL SUPPORT ME. AND IF POSSIBLE, PLEASE ALSO LOOK AT MY ORIGINAL SERIES, "RECORD OF SOUTA-KUN'S AKIHABARA STRUGGLE," ALSO ON SALE FROM G-FANTASY COMICS. I MEAN, PLEASE BUY IT. PLEASE (SERIOUS EYES).

A CERTAIN DAY, NOVEMBER 2005 / JIRO SUZUKI

TRANSLATION NOTES

Pg. 26
The **Diet** is Japan's legislative body. It's similar to the United States' Congress.

Pg. 57
Hijiki is a type of sea vegetable native to Japan, often used in foods.

Page 71
The **Three Sacred Treasures of Japan** are three items handed down as a symbol of the imperial throne. They're a sword, a mirror, and a jewel, which are said to have been used to tempt the sun goddess Amaterasu out of hiding and bring light back to the land. The phrase "three sacred treasures" has also come to be used to refer to three things you can't do without.

Pg. 81
Nii-nii, Satoko's nickname for her older brother, comes from *onii-san*, a more common way to refer to one's older brother. It also sounds like a cat meowing.

Pg. 89
Unlike what we refer to as a **futon** in the United States, in Japan, a futon is a set of two blankets, a thick, mattress-like one to sleep on, and another to keep warm. It's very common to lay out futons every night and then roll them up and put them away in the morning instead of having a bed.

Pg. 95
Osechi is the word for the fabulous food that is prepared for New Year's celebrations. Mion hasn't just brought a lunch—she's brought a feast!

Pg. 119
Koushien is a district in the Hyogo Prefecture, known for holding the national high school baseball tournament.

"HIGURASHI WHEN THEY CRY: CURSE KILLING ARC" VOLUME TWO (CONCLUSION)!!

THROW AWAY-

-ALL THE MEMORIES!

HIGURASHI
WHEN THEY CRY
CURSE KILLING ARC ❶

RYUKISHI07
Jiro Suzuki

Translation: Alethea Nibley and Athena Nibley

Lettering: AndWorld Design

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

Higurashi WHEN THEY CRY Curse Killing Arc, Vol. 1
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